ATLANTA-FULTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
R0001621689

AIRWAYS, INC.

AIRWAYS, INC.

BY

JOHN DOS PASSOS

A New Playwrights' Theatre Production

NEW YORK
THE MACAULAY COMPANY

812
Dos Passos

COPYRIGHT, 1928, BY
JOHN DOS PASSOS

CLOSED STACKS
812
Dos Passos

All rights reserved including that of translation into foreign languages. All acting rights, both professional and amateur, including motion picture rights, are reserved in the United States, Great Britain, and all countries of the Copyright Union by the author and publisher.

The play is dedicated to the reading public only and no performance may be given without special arrangement with the publisher.

B-T 1.50
11-19-28

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

LIST OF CHARACTERS

BLOOMSTEIN
KLEIN
CYRUS H. TURNER, *known as Dad*
MARTHA TURNER
PROFESSOR RASKOLNY
JOE SHAVLOVSKI
EDISON TURNER, *known as Eddy*
EVE
EDNA
CLAUDE TURNER
SMITH
JONATHAN P. DAVIS
MAE PETEET
ELMER TURNER
WALTER GOLDBERG
REPORTER
AN OLD GERMAN
MCGOVERN
AMARI
ELIZA DONAHUE
GROVE
GLADYS
POSTMAN, BOOTLEGGERS, WAITER, KIDS, STRIKERS, SHERIFF, COPS, BULLS, DICKS, ESKIMO PIE AND FRANKFURTER VENDORS

The action takes place in a street of onefamily houses in a suburb of any large American city.

AIRWAYS, INC.

ACT I

The setting of the stage implies a street in a suburb. Three small onefamily houses with porches face the audience. The Turners' house in the centre is seen entire, a front porch with a screen door flanked by two windows. A corner of each of the houses to the left and right is visible. The house stage right is unfinished and that to the left is empty and dilapidated. On the scaffolding of the new house is a sign that reads:

GLENSIDE GARDENS

Exclusive Homes on Magnificent Terms
lots 25 x 100 from $4500 up

STARTER AND BLOOMSTEIN
Realtors

1134 FLORAL AVENUE Tel. Evergreen 4655

Beyond the houses is the suggestion of an empty lot and at the end of it the tall windows and chimneys of a powerhouse and endless factory buildings. It is the end of a sultry afternoon in late summer.

Carpenters are working on the new house, a sound of sawing and hammering comes from them. Kids are playing on the porch of the old house.

When the lights go on to denote the beginning of the act, two old men, DAD TURNER *and the* PROFESSOR, *are sitting on either side of the steps of the Turners' porch drowsing over newspapers. The* PROFESSOR *is dark with sunken eyes and a close-cropped, grizzled beard. His shoulders have a discouraged stoop to them. He is older than* DAD *but more vigorous and more tired.* DAD *is a withered man with blue childish eyes that look out with surprise from a small sour face.*

From the old house comes the crash tinkle of a brick thrown through a window. All the kids run across the stage. From the opposite direction enter strolling and looking about them with an appraising air, two real estate men, IRVING BLOOMSTEIN *and* EMMANUEL KLEIN. BLOOMSTEIN *is small and eager and wears glasses;* KLEIN *is taller and pompous with a trace of a European accent.*

BLOOMSTEIN

Yes sir, I think you'll find this a very interesting development, something new in suburban developments. . . . You see we combine here a residential section on the garden city plan with a teeming industrial centre. This, sir, is the model city of the future. You see behind these streets of lowpriced, artistic onefamily houses you can descry the sterner buildings of the Hartshorn Mills, the Swastika Refrigerator Company, the Universal Electric Plant. These

lots make their appeal to the higher type of mill-worker and small business man.

KLEIN

We are on the edge of great developments I can see that. . . . If we can only restore confidence.

BLOOMSTEIN

It's just a phase. . . . All this unrest is just a phase. Confidence will be restored. It is a great pleasure to me to take you through these developments at this historic moment, Mr. Klein.

KLEIN

Let me tell you Mr. Bloomstein, if you could see your way to restore confidence . . . prosperity.

[*They go off stage right. The postman crosses them, stops in front of the Turners' house and blows his whistle.* DAD *and the* PROFESSOR *both wake up with a start.*]

POSTMAN

Special delivery for Elmer Turner.

DAD TURNER

[*Querulously, excited.*] All right . . . I'll sign for it. It's his third today. Well, his old father's reduced to the position of mailclerk and that's that.

POSTMAN

That's the wrong line, mister, please sign again down here. [POSTMAN *goes off.*]

DAD TURNER

It's these changing times, Professor. I'm telling you, Professor, it's a hard thing for a man like me to sit here smoking my pipe and waiting for the young folks to come home from work. We're on the junkpile, Professor.

PROFESSOR

When I was young in the old countries where there were many old men—

DAD TURNER

[*Breaking in.*] The junkpile for us, is what my children think. Read the papers, Professor. They wish we'd get out from under their feet. But some day you'll read in them very papers headlines as tall as your hand "Turner's Rotary Alcohol Engine has revolutionized industry."

PROFESSOR

I was a revolutionist in those days. I was for blasting the old men out of their thrones. Piakoff sold us to the Austrian police.

DAD TURNER

I'll show them yet. They think they're so smart with their mechanical iceboxes and aeroplanes. Why we used to laugh at Langley for a fool.

[*Western Union messenger boy comes in right with a telegram.*]

MESSENGER

Telegram for Turner.

DAD TURNER

They won't even take the time to write through the United States Mails. O, the waste—

[MESSENGER *goes off left.*]

PROFESSOR

Piakoff was my best friend, he had curly hair, fiery eyes and speech, his sister and I were in love, we had everything in common, we felt that we would conquer the whole world with eloquence and a few statistics. The age of reason was to dawn again. He sold us out to the secret police and married a banker's daughter.

[*Five o'clock whistles blow. Work noises stop.*]

[EDISON TURNER *and* JOE *come in left, talking. They are in workclothes.* JOE *is a middleaged, squarefaced carpenter, slow of speech.* EDDY, *as everybody calls him, is a cocky youth of eighteen with babyish pink cheeks and a too-anxious jerky way of talking. He is the youngest of the Turners.*]

JOE

Well, you don't have far to go when the whistle blows, do you kid?

EDDY

Sure I do. All I do home's get cleaned up and eat. I don't stay round them stickinthemuds. I'm goin' into the city tonight.

JOE

Pretty young for that stuff. Lemme tell yer kid, there's nutten in it.

EDDY

I ain't goin' to raise hell. . . . I like to see a good picture for a change. Out here they don't have anythin' not a century old. I like to see a good new feature.

JOE

Well, tomorrer I'm takin' the fambly down to the Island.

EDDY

Well, goodnight, Joe. Be good.

JOE

Goodnight, Eddy. If you can't be good be careful.

[*As* EDDY *goes through the screen door on the porch, his sister* MARTHA *meets him. She has her arms stacked with cards and letters. She is a tall brisk girl near thirty, with a rather exaggeratedly offhand manner. She rarely loses a tired smiling bitter poise.*]

MARTHA

Say Eddy, mail these cards for me like a good boy.

EDDY

I can't. I'm in a hurry.

MARTHA

Sure you can. It'll just take a minute.

EDDY

I want to get cleaned up. Why don't you do it yourself?

MARTHA

I'm waiting for a phone call from Dr. Hopwood. . . .

EDDY

What de hell are you gettin' up now, a Jewish picnic?

MARTHA

It's just some organization work I'm doing for Dr. Hopwood. They're getting up a. . . .

EDDY

Jez, I'd think you'd take a rest sometimes an' go out on parties an' have a good time.

MARTHA

I don't see it's any of your business, Mr. Smarty.

EDDY

What is it, a church social or a prohibition meetin' or a hallelujah supper?

MARTHA

Go ahead, Eddy, be a sport, take that stuff down to the mailbox.

EDDY

But other girls go out, lots of 'em older'n you too. The fellers think you're an' awful flat tire.

MARTHA

They think I'm an old maid, do they? Well, let 'em.

EDDY

I'd think your boy friend'd take you out now an' then.

MARTHA

Go up an' change your clothes an' stop arguing.

EDDY

Guess he's afraid he might have to spend fifty cents, the damn kike. [*Goes in through the door.*]

MARTHA

I should think it was about time you began to grow up, you little smart Alek. Say, Dad, you wouldn't mind mailing these envelopes for me would you? It'll be a little walk before supper for you and the Professor.

DAD TURNER

I guess you children think that's about all an old man's good for, running errands.

MARTHA

Now Dad you know I didn't mean that. I'd take 'em down myself if I didn't have to wait for a phone call and then there's supper to get. I thought it'd be a nice walk. There's a breeze come up and it's cooler.

DAD

[*Getting up.*] When I was a boy it was the youngest did the errands, oh well, things have changed! I'll take them. My what a lost of postcards. You must be quite out of pocket for these stamps.

MARTHA

Oh it's all right, I don't pay for them. I just give my time. I'm so anxious to make it a success.

DAD

What?

MARTHA

That organization work.

DAD

[*Vaguely.*] O dear me.

[DAD *and the* PROFESSOR *walk off right with the letters.* MARTHA *sighs, stands still a moment reading the paper she's picked up on the stoop. People pass from left to right on their*

way home. Two girls are talking, as they walk across, a millworker and a stenog.]

EVE

Mrs. Gabrilowitch was prostrated in bed.

EDNA

And the photographers took flashlight photographs with her little girl's doll in her arms.

EVE

Don't it give you the creeps?

EDNA

A man you ride home next to on the subway, what's to keep him from being a ripper?

JANE

And Laura she's the operator downstairs, she said as a guy said to her. . . .

[CLAUDE TURNER *comes in right talking excitedly to a man named* SMITH. CLAUDE *is the oldest of* CYRUS TURNER'S *four children. A dry positive man of about thirty-five. Fifteen years of white-collar slavery have taken all the joy out of him and left in its place a sort of sneering, timid self-righteousness.*]

CLAUDE

Read the riot act to 'em, that's what they ought to do. Why since this strike's been on things have been terrible out here, real estate values going down,

can't get a loan from the bank, confidence undermined. . . .

SMITH

But don't you think . . . ?

CLAUDE

Man I know what I'm talking about. . . . Since I've been working for the Chamber of Commerce. . . .

MARTHA

Hello Claude.

CLAUDE

Hello Sis.

SMITH

Good evenin' Miss Turner. It's been a sizzler hasn't it?

[*Claude goes up on the porch and kisses* MARTHA.]

CLAUDE

Be good, George.

SMITH

If you can't be good, be careful. [*He goes off left.*]

CLAUDE

Elmer turned up yet, Sis?

MARTHA

He said he was coming to supper. I'm having steak and mushrooms for him,

CLAUDE

You always did spoil him.

MARTHA

Well, don't you do the same thing?

CLAUDE

I wonder if he got that record.

MARTHA

O, I know he got it. If he tried for it he got it. He was only a little worried about the feed pipe.

CLAUDE

Be sure and make him leave a check.

MARTHA

Why should he spend his money on us?

CLAUDE

You don't want us to be thrown out of the house, do you? After all the payments we've made. . . .

MARTHA

Well, it's not much of a house. I wish I was free of it.

CLAUDE

So that you could spend all your time round at the church with committee meetings and all that or talking Bolshevism with that Walter Goldberg.

MARTHA

You're at the office all day. You don't know what backbreaking work it is keeping a home going.

CLAUDE

Well, Elmer's not around much any more.

MARTHA

He was the only one ever gave me any help.

CLAUDE

You always liked him best anyway.

[DAD *and the* PROFESSOR *have come back.*]

DAD

And won't both of you lay off? You never give anybody any peace round here with your fighting and squabbling.

MARTHA

Oh, dad, he was just kidding. It's been a hot day an' everybody's got their dander up.

[*Phone rings inside; she runs in.*]

CLAUDE

I should think I'd be the one needed a little peace after working all day. All you people had to do was sit round and keep cool and read the papers.

DAD

I know I'm a burden and a trouble to all of you, but don't worry, it won't be for long with my chil-

dren a lot of ungrateful whippersnappers making my last years a hell with their squabblin' and chatterin'.

PROFESSOR

In certain savage tribes in New Guinea, they put the old people up in the trees and shake them once a year in the spring; if they don't fall out they let them live another year.

DAD

Elmer's the only one who has any feeling for me. He understands machinery.

He knows that some day Turner's Rotary Alcohol Engine will come into its own.

[MAE PETEET *and* JONATHAN P. DAVIS *walk in right.* MAE *is a hard, gushing blonde of about thirty. She has a wisecracking manner and a bit of a whiskey voice.* JONATHAN P. DAVIS *of Guava Hill, Florida, is a realtor and a promoter. He is a tall man with the hair a little fuzzy above his ears. He talks with the elaborate boom of a southern senator. He feels himself a great man with the limelight full on his noble brow.*]

MAE

[*To* DAD.]

Pardon me, Mr. Turner, but is Elmer in?

DAD

How do you do, miss? . . . Expected any minute.

DAVIS

Hm, glad to see you, Mr. Turner. We want to congratulate him, sir.

DAD

He ain't home yet. . . . I reckon he'll be coming along pretty soon. There's a letter and a telegram for him.

DAVIS

I suppose you know, Mr. Turner, that Elmer nailed down the world's altitude record this afternoon. How high was it, Mae?

MAE

Seven or eight miles or something. Oo, I hate to think of it.

DAVIS

Double the height of Everest.

DAD

Well, sir, I'm very pleased to see you, and you too Miss. Won't you sit down on the porch chairs, us old fellers get in the habit of sittin' on the steps like kids. This is Professor Raskolny.

DAVIS

Glad to meet you.

MAE

Howdedoo.

DAVIS

Well, sir, it's a great day for the gasoline engine.

DAD

All gasoline's good for now is to clean clothes with. Do you realize, Mr. Davis, that if they used alcohol engines they could develop twice or three times the power per cubic foot of fuel. Mr. Davis, I am the owner, constructor and inventor of Turner's Rotary Alcohol Motor.

DAVIS

A lot of improvements going on out here I should say. . . . Hm. . . . Forty-five hundred, pretty steep for lots like these, on the edge of a factory and tenement district too. And what about this strike? That's bad, shakes confidence. Down where I come from, forty-five hundred will buy a slice of real permanent satisfaction. Ever heard of Guava Hill Gardens? We're selling acre lots there on substantially the same terms, a stone's throw from one hundred miles of magnificent beach, the finest year round climate in the world. . . .

MAE

It must be wonderful. Elmer can't talk of anything else.

DAVIS

The future lies in the garden development.

DAD

[*Vaguely.*] There are many things coming that I don't suppose I'll live to see.

MAE

I wonder what made Elmer late. . . . I thought he'd never come out of that tailspin.

DAVIS

He brought her down to the ground as gently as a Rolls-Royce coming to stop at the curb.

[MARTHA *comes to the door, wiping her hands on her apron.*]

MARTHA

Why, hello, did you people come to see Elmer?

MAE

[*Icily.*] How do you do, Miss Turner? He'll be here any minute.

MARTHA

He said he was coming home to supper.

DAVIS

Allow me to present myself, Miss Turner. I'm Jonathan Davis. As you know, your brother and I are going into partnership in some very interesting little enterprises.

MAE

Mr. Davis's backing him in the flight.

MARTHA

Did he make it?

MAE

[*Scornfully.*] Knocked it into a cocked hat.

DAD

If he took my advice and put the necessary work on the Turner Rotary Alcohol Engine, he could virtually annihilate distance.

PROFESSOR

Distance has been annihilated many times. Zeno annihilated it, Einstein annihilated it. . . .

[*Popping of a motorcycle off stage.*]

MARTHA

Here's his bike. . . .

[Elmer Turner *comes in running a bright red shiny motorbike along the gutter with one hand. He's the second son, twenty-six, handsome, sunburned. He has not yet understood that it is his bluff, boyish helplessness and immaturity in everything not directly pertaining to gasoline motors that endears him so to his sister and brothers and everybody he meets. He's the lucky member of the Turner family, the only one who has "made good."*]

DAVIS

Congratulations, old man.

ELMER

Hullo folks.

MAE

[*In a low voice.*] Hello Ignatz.

DAVIS

Hail the conquering hero.

MARTHA

Feel all right, Elmer?

ELMER

Sure.

MARTHA

Wasn't it terribly cold?

ELMER

I guess it can get colder.

DAVIS

How much did you make it by?

ELMER

Can't tell till they've checked up on the instruments.

DAD

Well, my boy, perhaps we can do something about the Turner motor now. Mr. Davis seemed very much interested.

ELMER

I hope Dad didn't talk you to death.

MARTHA

Of course you're all staying to supper.

ELMER

Jez, I wish we could, I. . . .

DAVIS

Miss Turner, I hope you will forgive us this time. You see there are certain business associates we have to meet in town . . . er. . . .

MARTHA

Elmer, can't you stay and join them later?

ELMER

Honestly, I can't Mart. . . . Look, I'll put on my dark suit. . . . It'll only take a second. . . . I'm so glad to have you meet Dave, Mart . . . he picked me up when I was nothing but a beachhopper. He's done a lot for me! [*He goes indoors.*]

DAVIS

I consider myself lucky to have had the foresight to see it. Airplane transportation is going to revolutionize land values. Steam made outoftown realestate a possibility, automobiles gave you the suburban development, what is aviation going to do?

DAD

Nothing much while you use an unreliable fuel like gasoline.

DAVIS

It's men with scientific training like yourself, Mr. Turner, I'd like to interest in our new reimprove-

ment policy down at Guava Hill. Social and scientific progress are assured, sir, once our great system of post-possession payments is in operation, not the installment plan, no sir, but a system of small post-possession payments that clinch the investment. No possible rational human wish unfulfilled. A man with a salary of fifty dollars a week can start payments on a Rolls-Royce, the Waldorf Astoria, or a troupe of trained seals if he so desires. . . .

MARTHA

But suppose you only make eighteen a week?

DAVIS

Our great developments at Guava Hill are to be the restcure, the playground for weary humanity. Come all ye disconsolate. . . .

MARTHA

And how much admission?

DAVIS

Very moderate terms. For a few hundred dollars down and easy monthly payments I can fix you up with an attractive lot, maisonette in Spanish mission style, garage, garbage incinerator, frigidaire, installation . . . and with the first hundred dollars you acquire an untold tropical wealth, the burning azure sky, the neverfailing sun, the endless beach, the sparkling ocean, the spiceladen breeze.

ELMER

[*Rushing out the door.*] All right, are we ready?

MARTHA

Well, goodbye . . . I've got to go back to my kitchen. Have a good time. [*She goes back in through the screen door.*]

DAVIS

Goodnight, gentlemen.

ELMER

Well, goodnight, everybody. I'll be sort of late, Dad. Will you tell Mart not to wait up. . . . And ask Eddy to take the motorbike in, will you please?

MAE

[*As they go out.*] I guess she thought I ought to stay and help her get supper. Last time I did that I washed all the dishes and my hands were ruined for a week. What do you want to drag everybody around to see your relations for anyway?

ELMER

O, I dunno.

MAE

You ought to know by this time that we'll never get along. [ELMER, DAVIS *and* MAE *go off right.*]

PROFESSOR

[*Looking straight ahead of him.*] I was born in a little village full of violin-playing in Hungary.

When I was twelve I was studying calculus. At thirteen I was corresponding with the Russian nihilists. At fifteen I ran away because my father beat me for not kissing the archduke's hand. In Vienna I worked eighteen hours a day as attendant at a biochemical laboratory. The world was a huge ball then, the universe a mighty harmony of ellipses, everything moved mysteriously, incalculable distances through the ether. We used to feel the awe of the distant stars upon us. All that led to was the eighty-eight naval gun, ersatz, and the night airraids over the cities. A magnificent spectacle.

After the collapse of the shining socialist dream, I came to America. Reaction reached out after me over the telegraph. I wanted to escape the world tortured by airraids and radio. I wanted to escape a warshattered world without hope. I wanted to go far away. Nowhere is far any more. Distance has slapped back in my face like a broken elastic.

[*In the pauses during the* PROFESSOR's *speech there have been children's voices singing off stage.*

"Oh if you're up, you're up
And if you're down, you're down
But if you're against the strikers
You're upside down."]

[WALTER GOLDBERG *comes in talking to a reporter.*]

WALTER

But we're not humanitarians, it's not charity we want but a sane arrangement of society. You fellers are always ready to run sob stuff about the poor working girl, but whenever we try to put some meaning into it. . . .

REPORTER

Well, it isn't our fault, Walter.

WALTER

O, I know you're just a lot of wageslaves like the rest of us. But you get so used to shooting the bull that. . . .

REPORTER

But what's going to happen next?

WALTER

You stick around and keep your eyes open and you'll see a lot happen. . . . You saw the meeting broken up, didn't you? Well, go round and see how people are living . . . go and talk to the workers. . . . No use sticking round with me. I'm no more than anybody else in this.

[*Strikers: men, women and children crowd across the stage, cheering and booing. A man has gotten up on the porch of the unoccupied house and started to speak.*]

SPEAKER

[*An old German, with a worn fatherly face and drooping mustaches.*] You haf slafed your life away

in de bosses' mills and your fadhers before you and your kids after you yet. Vat is a man to do with seventeen-fifty a week? His wife must vork nights to make another ten, must vork nights an' cook and wash in day an' vatfor? So that the bosses can get rich an' the stockholders and bondholders. It is too much. . . . Ve stood it before because ve vere not organized. Now we have union. . . . We must all stand together for union.

[*Strikers cheer. Cops with clubs come on left and start dispersing the crowd.*]

COPS

All right, git along. . . . Stop blockin' the sidewalk. . . . Dispoise.

WALTER

[*Gets up on porch.*] All right, comrades. . . . No use having a fight. . . . Walk away slowly.

COPS

Keep movin'. . . . Keep movin'. . . .

[*Gradually the stage clears except for* WALTER *and the reporter who slipped through the police line.*]

WALTER

That's funny. They let us right through. They don't recognize me because I've got a new hat. . . . God they're dumb.

REPORTER

I showed the sergeant my police card.

WALTER

Well I suppose you boys'll call that a riot.

[*They go off right.* DAD *and the* PROFESSOR *are still sitting on either side of the Turners' porch.*]

PROFESSOR

We held the meeting in a barn at the edge of town. The fraternal delegates sat in groups in the hay.

A man whose name we never knew spoke about the workers' commonwealth.

It began to rain and the water gurgled through the holes in the roof. In the pauses in his speech we could hear it hissing over the young wheatfields.

When the speech was over we thought the world was already free.

We sat silent, unable to speak until a girl began suddenly to sob.

Then we rose to our feet and cheered until straw fell in our faces from the rafters.

Cossacks who had surrounded the barn fired a volley into it.

They sabred the wounded and carried off the survivors to Siberia.

I escaped in the company of a little Turk by hiding in the sheeppen.

In the morning the shepherd found us hiding among the sheep. He let us go and we shook hands and parted.

Larks rose continually from under our feet walking across the new wheatfields to the frontier, in the spring morning sorrow for lost friends was sopped up by the sun like the dew.

All history seemed unrolling in my head.

DAD

They won't listen to an old man anymore.

PROFESSOR

In the Congo, they drown the old people in rivers.

EDDY

[*Coming out dressed up in his good clothes with a straw hat. The tide on the street has turned. People have had supper and are strolling out.*] Mart's terrible late wid supper. I guess she was out here chewin' the rag with Elmer's highhat friends, wasn't she Dad? Wassat? The strikers? Jez, I could see the cops chasin' 'em from my winder.

DAD

Elmer had to go into the city with this Mr. Davis to discuss some important business.

EDDY

Important cocktails in some swell cabaret.

DAD

He said for you to take his motorcycle round back. You'd better put it in the garage. I'm afraid

of these crowds. In the old days nothing was ever stolen.

EDDY

I can't, I got my good suit on. I don't see why Mart is so slow about supper.

DAD

Edison, your father's asking you to do this.

EDDY

[*Lights a cigarette.*] Let him take care of his own things.

CLAUDE

[*From window.*] Well, supper's on the table.

EDDY

It's about time.

PROFESSOR

So long as we can eat. . . .

CLAUDE

Come on, Dad.

DAD

I don't want to eat. I'm sick of being ordered around.

MARTHA

[*Comes out on the porch.*] Biscuits are getting cold, Dad.

DAD

I'm not hungry. I'm not going to eat.

CLAUDE

I can't do anything with him.

MARTHA

O, Dad.

CLAUDE

[*Meaningfully to* MARTHA.] I can't do anything with any of you, Mart.

MARTHA

[*Walks over to the open window and talks to* CLAUDE *through it.*] But Claude, it's none of your business about Walter.

CLAUDE

He's just a damn crook getting what he can out of a lot of ignorant foreigners.

MARTHA

Claude, honestly, he's not in it for money.

CLAUDE

What is he in it for then?

MARTHA

You know how he lives. He never has a nickel.

CLAUDE

Wouldn't let you know if he had, for fear you'd make him buy you a soda some time. Oughta seen him runnin' down the street with a cop after him.

MARTHA

When, Claude? Just now? O, you're just pickin' on me for the sake of pickin' on me.

CLAUDE

Well, who wouldn't be sore if they found their sister running around with a damn kike and a long-haired anarchistic agitator at that. You could have had the pick of decent fellers, fellers like Elmer.

MARTHA

But there aren't many fellers like Elmer.

CLAUDE

I guess you're right. He's one in a million.

EDDY

[*From inside.*] Say, when do we eat?

[*Martha goes in through the screen door.*]

DAD

Everywhere they're building ramshackle houses for young folks. . . .

[Eve *and* Edna *pass from left to right.*]

EDNA

But Eve, you ought to come. It's goin' to be a swell party.

EVE

But I told you I had a date, dearie.

EDNA

They ain't millhands goes to that joint. They're regular fellers with money . . . college boys an' all that. . . .

EVE

Well, what's the matter with millhands?

EDNA

Don't be silly, Eve. They don't give you a good time like regular city fellers wid money do. [*They go off right.*]

DAD

Ozone Park, Crystal Meadow, Joyland, Fortune Heights, Coral Gables, Quickbuilt demountable homes for young people. Maisonettes knocked together out of laths and plaster and enamel paint and kindlin' wood, and no place for an old man in them, no place for a tired man without a job. When they hustle for money to buy bonds to pay the interest on mortgages to grab stocks on a tip; they think they'll buy acre lots of happiness where the fountain of youth was in Florida; they think they'll buy a nickleplated future monogram engraved to order like I did; and what they buy is being sold and having your kids hate you cause you're old and being an old man without a job.

[*Dusk: kids are playing in the empty house next door.* DAD *gets up and yells at them.*]

DAD

Get outa there you little rats.
[KIDS *yell.*] Get outa there you little rats.

KIDS

Ole Dad Turner was a funny man
Washed his face in a frying pan
Picked his teeth widde leg of a table
Can't ketch us cause he ain't able.

DAD

[*Yells in a choked voice.*] Get outa there you little rats.

COP

[*Walking the beat.*] Scat. Them kids is terrible, Mr. Turner.

DAD

[*Puffing.*] They won't mind me. Nobody minds me.

COP

Monkeyin' wid de bike, was they?

DAD

That's Elmer's motorcycle. I told Eddy to put it in back.

COP

There's nutten they'll stop at, them kids. Used to be an easy beat, this, but it's gettin' worse every day. I guess that times is changin'. Strikes and agitators going around and the like o' that.

DAD

It's coming, but I won't live to see it.

COP

Well, sir, you ought to be proud of Elmer. Tell me it's all in the evening papers.

KIDS

[*Down street, singing.*]

Old Dad Turner was a funny man
Combed his hair wid de back of a chair. . . .

DAD

He won't listen to me, either. He's wastin' his time with those gasoline motors.

COP

Darn their little dirty hides. What are they up to now? [*He goes off.*]

EDNA

[*Comes back from the right.*] Say Mr. Turner, is Eddy troo supper yet?

DAD

You can go in an' see.

EDNA

No, I wouldn't. Martha'd look at me kinda funny.

DAD

You're too busy thinkin' what you're goin' to do next to take the time to talk to an old man. You

don't know what it is to walk the streets with rheumatism in your joints just because you're old and when the men who got rich on your inventions won't take the time to see you just because you're old. Sorry we haven't any jobs for an old man, sorry, we employ nothing but young men. No, it's not scientific qualifications we require, sir, it's just because you're old. Have you ever had 'em try to hand out a five to get rid of you?

EDNA

I'd take it quick before they changed their minds.

DAD

Now don't you let Eddy spend a lot of money tonight.

EDNA

No such luck. He's just goin' to take me to the movies.

DAD

A lot of rubbish, and the flicker hurts your eyes.

EDNA

It's a Valentino picture at the Chinese Garden.

DAD

Well, look at him. He didn't last long. They think they're pretty smart, but they don't last.

EDNA

But it's thrilling. The gods loved him and he died young.

DAD

Children like you ought to go to see educational pictures.

EDNA

But he was so wonderful looking, and to think that he's dead.

DAD

Better looking than Elmer?

EDNA

But in the movies it's different. A feller in the movies is different. [EDDY *comes out on the porch.*] Hello Eddy.

EDDY

For cryin' out loud, Edna. . . . What'd you come around here for?

EDNA

We got troo supper early, I guess. I saw Elmer go by on his motorcycle a long time ago. I taut you was troo too.

EDDY

You wanted to see Elmer. That's what's bitin' you.

EDNA

No I didn't Eddy, honest. I'd like to see him all right. He's your brudder, ain't he?

EDDY

I thought maybe I'd go into the city. She's got a crush on Elmer. He wouldn't look at a little kid like you, Edna. He had his goil fren' wid him.

EDNA

What's she like?

EDDY

She's a humdinger, all right. Mart says she's a strawberry blond. They wouldn't stay to supper. They were goin' to eat wid a big realtor in some Broadway cabaret.

EDNA

I bet he spends a lot of jack on her.

EDDY

Sure he does. He don't care much about her though. Never was a skoit Elmer cared much about.

EDNA

I guess he treats 'em rough, like Rudolph Valentino.

EDDY

Sure. Hell, he don't pay attention to 'em. [*They stroll off down the street.*] You like Elmer better'n you do me. . . .

EDNA

No, I don't, Eddy. . . . Sure, I think he's swell . . . his picture in all the papers, makin' a record an' everything. Gee, couldn't you get him to take me

up widdim sometime? Gee, he is good lookin' in his pictures in the papers. . . .

EDDY

I guess it's natural a girl should. But Jez, I'm goin' to make money myself soon. Once I get in the union I'll be makin' six or seven dollars a day.

EDNA

But what's a carpenter's helper?

EDDY

Ted Merz said he'd fix it up right away an' he's an A F of L delegate an' he can do anything he likes.

EDNA

Why don't you get a job doin' clean work, like in an office?

EDDY

I'm goin' to nightschool an' learn drafting. Say Edna, can't you an me . . . ? Jez you look swell tonight. . . . Jiminy I'd like to raise hell. . . .

EDNA

[*Suddenly freezing up on him.*] Well, so long. If you can't be good, be careful.

EDDY

Don't be a fool. I was just kidding. Come on, I'll set you up to a soda an' we'll go to the movies. You

an' me'll go to see a real good show. [EDDY *puts his arm around her waist.*]

EDNA

Ain't he the little live wire? Don't Eddy, not where everybody can see us. Let's go look in the house they just finished . . . some guy left the door open. Ain't he the heavy petter. [*They go inside.*]

MARTHA

Now Dad, aren't you going to eat something? I'm all ready to clear up.

DAD

No, I don't want to eat.

MARTHA

But you'll catch your death of cold. There's quite a breeze blowing.

DAD

You children wouldn't care so much.

MARTHA

O, Dad, I wish you'd eat some supper.

DAD

You children don't think I'm much account, do you? I guess you're right about science and invention ain't much accounted nowadays. Some day you'll find me dead in my tracks and then you'll be sorry.

MARTHA

Dad, I don't like you to talk that way.

DAD

You'd be sorry if you drove me to a desperate thing.

MARTHA

Go along in and eat your supper, Dad. The Professor's sitting at the table waiting for you.

CLAUDE

[*In his shirtsleeves, comes from back of the house.*] Say Mart, have you seen Edison anywhere?

DAD

I'll go sit with him, but I couldn't eat anything. [*He goes in.*]

MARTHA

He went off with that girl. She's not so much.

CLAUDE

That kid hasn't got the right attitude about things. I don't know what's the matter with those youngsters.

MARTHA

Her family's just a bunch of gangsters. It doesn't do any good my talking to him. Why don't you talk to him, Claude?

CLAUDE

It ain't my business. I don't see that you got so much to brag about.

MARTHA

Now Claude, lay off that. You don't know anything about Walter or what he's trying to do except what you read in the papers.

CLAUDE

That's enough, ain't it? I wanted Edison to help me fix up that set Elmer made.

MARTHA

Can't Dad give you a hand?

CLAUDE

A fat chance. All he'd do is talk me to death.

MARTHA

O, I can't stand the way everybody in this house just putters around.

CLAUDE

That's why I wanted to get the radio fixed. Let in a little jazz, a little of the outside world.

MARTHA

I know, but it all gets on my nerves so.

CLAUDE

I'll take you round to the movies.

MARTHA

But you ought to be taking some girl out a nice evening like this, and Saturday night too.

CLAUDE

Gettin' old, I guess.

MARTHA

All right, I'll go tidy up the kitchen and put my hat on.

[EDNA *and* EDDY *come out giggling from the deserted house.*]

EDNA

But suppose you did wake up and find a hundred dollar bill under your pillow.

EDDY

I'd think I'd been taking hop.

EDNA

Say we'd better hurry or we'll miss the nine o'clock picture.

EDDY

Well, who's been keepin' me?

EDNA

Let's run.

EDDY

Hey, for Chrissake people'll think we're nutten but kids. Trow away dat cigarette.

[*Exit. People pass, going to movies, dances, speakeasies.* WALTER GOLDBERG *comes in.* JOE *runs into him in front of the Turner's house.*]

JOE

Say, Walter, they're looking everywhere for you. They just raided strike headquarters. Better be careful. I think the bulls are lookin' for you.

WALTER

I didn't think they'd do that tonight. Plainclothes men?

JOE

Sure, dicks from the agencies, industrial squad men an' everythin'.

WALTER

Where's Heineman?

JOE

Down at the corner wid de bus. Shall I tell him to wait?

WALTER

No. Tell him to go and get Anderson and to go round and bail the boys out.

JOE

I think there was pretty much of a fight. There was hell to pay on Pleasant Avenue. Jez, I'm glad I stuck to the buildin' trades where you get some protection.

WALTER

Well, I don't see what they get by it. They'll smash up the typewriters, I guess. Who did they pinch?

JOE

They had Moloney and Zadko on the wagon. Moloney's head was all bleedin'.

WALTER

The swine. He's only a kid. Look, Joe, I'm goin' to see if Martha Turner's in.

JOE

Is she a party member?

WALTER

No. She's just a girl I know. She's Elmer Turner's sister. She's all right though.

JOE

Sure I know her, kid brudder works wid me. [JOE *goes off right.*]

WALTER

I'll phone Anderson's office in a half hour. If you see anybody tell 'em we'll picket as usual. Bybye Joe. [*To* CLAUDE.] Good evening, Turner, is your sister in?

CLAUDE

No, she's out for the evening.

MARTHA

[*Coming to door.*] Why do you say that, Claude?

CLAUDE

Well, if you want to talk to him, you can. Don't blow the house up while I'm out. I'll take Elmer's motorbike out back. Can't trust anybody any more.

MARTHA

I'm sorry, Walter.

WALTER

He don't bother me. It's bigger than personal squabbles.

MARTHA

Now he'll go round to the legion post and shoot pool and talk about menaces. He'll have a much better time than he would have had taking me to the movies.

WALTER

I just had to talk to you. The strike's in a hell of a mess. If we can only hold out. I just had to have a few minutes off talking to you.

MARTHA

We might get to be kinda friends if we ever got a chance to see each other.

WALTER

It's funny when I get all fagged out all I have to do is talk to you and I feel so much better. It's like taking batteries to be recharged.

MARTHA

But Walter, you've got so much . . . I'm the one whose batteries need recharging.

WALTER

It's so terrible for you to live in this house. You ought to leave home, Mart.

MARTHA

But I can't. Somebody has to take care of Dad. Our home would all break up if it wasn't for me.

WALTER

Well, it ought to break up.

MARTHA

But they're my brothers, my people, my kind of people. I'm fond of them. They're much more my kind of people than you Walt.

WALTER

You mean because I'm a Jew.

MARTHA

If course not. I dunno, maybe there is something in it, but I don't think it's that.

WALTER

There's something in it. You'd have to be a Jew like me to understand. You've heard of the Pale. Everyone of us has something fenced up way down in us. We've been in prison for two thousand years.

I have the mind of a jailbird, that's why prison can't hurt me. That's why we throw ourselves into every movement of freedom. That's why I feel the slavery of the workers, I feel it as a worker and I feel it as a Jew. O, you can't imagine the overheated stuffiness of life at home on the East Side when I was a kid. We were all jailed in poverty and Judaism and in old customs and hatreds and wornout laws.

MARTHA

We're all of us that.

WALTER

You people are free compared to us. You're brutal and stupid and ugly, but you have that wide beach and the ocean beating on it somewhere inside you . . . that thing the workers must have.

MARTHA

I've felt it all along, Walt. It's just that there's something stupid and brutal and coarse that won't let me say it, that won't let me think it. [*All at once she starts to cry softly.*]

WALTER

Don't cry, old kid.

MARTHA

Let me cry just a little. It's wonderful to cry when you're happy.

WALTER

I wish I was feeling happy.

MARTHA

O, you're so swell, Walt.
[*A long pause.*]

WALTER

[*In a shaky voice.*] I'm . . . I'm pretty fond of you . . . myself . . . Mart. O, if you'd only let yourself be the way you really are. All this fussing around the Congregational Church. . . . My God, we'll all be dead soon.

MARTHA

I know I don't believe in it, but they're kind of used to having me around and I don't like to hurt their feelings. They're nice enough people in their way. They're not like you think they are at all. They're just kind of silly and vague. Didn't Dr. Hopwood come out for the strikers?

WALTER

But there's so much to do in the world. Working together, you and me. If I felt we really belonged to each other I'd feel so much stronger.

MARTHA

I know. I know.

CLAUDE

[*Bustling through the screen door.*] I suppose you're going to turn Martha into a damned anarchist.

WALTER

You know I have no more use for anarchism than you have.

MARTHA

He just thinks he's being funny.

CLAUDE

Well, I'm off. Don't wait up for me, I may be late. [*He walks off stiffly.*]

MARTHA

The trouble with my brothers is, they're such kids. Interrupted development. I don't guess they'll ever grow up. Except Elmer, and he's so taken up with mechanics and motors he doesn't know what's happening.

WALTER

Now that's a man I can admire.

MARTHA

O, they all get on my nerves till I think I'm going mad sometimes. First thing when I get up is wash the dishes they leave in the kitchen eating stuff at night when they come in. Then there's breakfast to get. By the time I've cleaned house and done the breakfast dishes and gone around to the stores a

little it's time to get dinner for Dad and the Professor. By the time I've done the dishes and tidied myself up a bit, the boys are coming home from work and I have to be getting supper. Some days I don't even read the paper.

WALTER

Why couldn't they eat round at the cafeteria, like I have to?

MARTHA

After all, look at your own life.

WALTER

It's not much, but all this stuff is so much bigger than I am.

MARTHA

What?

WALTER

Oh, you know, the girls on the picket line icy mornings before dawn, the guys who get beaten up, the workers little by little coming to realize their strength, the strategy of it all.

MARTHA

Suppose I put a record on the phonograph. This talk makes me feel so miserable. [*She goes inside.*]

[WALTER *sits looking down the empty street. Noises of Saturday night from a distance.*]

WALTER

I ought to get a move on. Say, Martha, can I come in?

[*"This is my lucky day" on phonograph, loud then low.*]

MARTHA'S VOICE

No, I'm coming out. I can't stand being in the house a night like this. [*She comes out through the screen door.*]

WALTER

I wanted to kiss you.

MARTHA

O, Walter, why can't we be happy the way other people are?

WALTER

Why don't you come and live with me? I haven't got enough money to support you, but you could get a job all right. It would be better than this.

MARTHA

No, I'm not the way you think I am at all. I'm not much. You must know plenty of girls nicer than me. [*Pulls her hand away.*] You don't really like me at all.

WALTER

Well, what do you think I'm sitting round here for ashamed of myself that I'm not working for the

strike. Do you think I just came for a social call? I'm crazy about you.

MARTHA

[*Loud.*] Dad, please turn off that phonograph. [*Low.*] Walter, I honestly don't understand you. You don't understand me.

WALTER

All right. You don't give a damn for me, that's all right. I got to go anyway.

MARTHA

Stay just a minute. I don't want you to go away feeling all horrid.

WALTER

I don't know why the hell I ever fell for you.

MARTHA

Because I set myself out to get you to, I guess. Like any woman would. Walter, can't you see that I think about you all day long, all night long? But I can't do anything about it at present, that's all. I'm just a nasty old maid.

WALTER

Well, I'm going. Good night. [*As he goes off right he meets* Joe *and* Eliza Donahue *coming in.* Eliza Donahue *is a bitter, middle-aged Irish woman. Her whole life has gone into workers' organizations. She*

has nothing left but jeering suspicion for the outside world.] Hello, what's up? I was just coming over.

ELIZA

Well, for Chrissake, it's about time. What are you thinking of Walt? Are you crazy, chasing skirts on a night like this when they're backing up the wagon and pinching everybody at strike headquarters, the sons of bitches.

WALTER

Honest, I'm ashamed of myself. I was so tired after those speeches over in New York. I hate playing up to that relief fund gang.

ELIZA

No use cryin' over it now. Did you know that a cop knocked down Anne Levitsky and kicked her in the stomach and now they won't let her be taken to the hospital? Snap out of it, Walt, and show us what you're made of. [*They hurry off.*]

MARTHA

[*Watches him from the porch. A pause, then* DAD *comes out.*] O, Dad, aren't you ever going to bed?

DAD

I'll be gone soon enough. You'll think more of me when I'm gone. Martha, my girl, think of me when you're old, when it suddenly comes to you that you won't live to see all the things you've dreamed about.

MARTHA

Dad, you talk so funny, what's the matter? Look, there's a lightning bug.

DAD

Cold light. Before you were born, Martha, I worked for twelve years on the problem of phosphorescence.

[*The* PROFESSOR *comes out.*]

MARTHA

Well, I guess I can't get either of you to bed. I hope I can trust you gentlemen to lock up the house. They've all got keys but Elmer. He said he was sleeping here tonight. I'll let him in. Goodnight.

DAD

There's probably going to be an electrical storm.

PROFESSOR

We put off in a flatboat one moonless night, summer lightning flickering behind the hills. The river was swollen, yellow in the streak of lanternlight. At a certain spot, a man we trusted was waiting with mausers. Every man of us was determined, seven thousand countrypeople, landless tenants and farmhands were waiting to rise, in a hundred cities revolutionists walked up and down the narrow streets waiting for the word. When we had pushed off, someone signalled with a lantern from the shore. Otto

was for turning back, but the girls said we were cowards. At the meeting spot, an unknown voice gave the password. Rechner was a police spy, a provocative agent. We were surrounded and shackled together in pairs. Nobody struggled, nobody said a word.

DAD

The problem of phosphorescence blows all their theories to smithereens. Newton said light was corpuscular. They think I'm an old stick-in-the-mud. And do you know how it all happened? It's the same thing all over the world, Professor, if you get in wrong with the interests. Early in life through the smallest accident I got in wrong with the big interests. It was in the old Equitable Building, the one that burned. I was a comparatively young man, holder of over a hundred patents, working for the Western Electric. I had just had a very successful interview with a promoter and he had given me a cigar and patted me on the back and said that tomorrow he would, at the signing of the contract, hand me a cool ten thousand as inventor's bonus in the company forming to manufacture and distribute the DUMBWATER NOISELESS SANITARY CONTRIVANCE which I had just perfected. In those days, New Yorkers still took off their hats when they stepped into an elevator where there were ladies. Well, sir, standing in the back of the elevator, wearing a gardenia in his buttonhole . . . I knew

him by the nose . . . was old J. P. himself. . . . Entirely by accident you understand, I stepped very hard with my heel upon his toe. Such a look of pain and hatred crossed his face as I haven't seen from that day to this. Naturally I apologized, but he did not answer, he just looked at me. Well, sir, from that day to this I haven't had a moment's luck. I'm a marked man.

CLAUDE

[*Walking down the street, smoking a cigar.*] Talkin' yet, Dad? Professor I'd think you'd be deaf. They were all drinkin' and playin' poker over at the post. I don't like that stuff, so I thought I'd come home an' get a good night's sleep.

MARTHA

[*From window.*] That you, Claude?

CLAUDE

Yeah.

MARTHA

Come over here. I want to talk to you.

CLAUDE

Well?

MARTHA

You're not sore at me, Claude, are you?

CLAUDE

Well, what's the use . . . you won't take my advice whatever I do. I just don't want you to throw yourself away on a damn crook, that's all.

MARTHA

It's something I've been thinking about for a long time. I want to get a job. Why can't we move into the city or something, into an apartment?

CLAUDE

But how about the house? We can't stop payments now. We almost own the place.

MARTHA

I'm sick of it.

CLAUDE

Why, it was you was the craziest about moving into this house.

MARTHA

I know, but it's just slavery.

CLAUDE

It'd mean the beanery for me for the rest of my life.

MARTHA

But you'll get married soon, probably.

CLAUDE

On thirty a week, a fat chance.

MARTHA

Plenty of fellers do it.

CLAUDE

They don't care how they live. I like to live right.

MARTHA

But you'll get a raise some day.

CLAUDE

With the Chamber of Commerce? A fat chance.

MARTHA

But, Claude, I tell you I can't stand it any more. I'll go crazy and you'll have the expense of keeping me in the nuthouse. I'm serious, I'm through.

CLAUDE

But what about Dad?

MARTHA

I forgot about Dad. We can fix up something.

CLAUDE

Well, it's no use jawing about it all night. I'm going to bed.

[*They both disappear into the house.*]

PROFESSOR

I was working as a stevedore loading melons into a barge. It was a moist spring day, the sun was

setting in pinkish steam over the river. I was eighteen and happy to be away from the stuffy wrangling rooms of the university. I was eighteen. Every time I moved it was pleasure, the twist and untwist of my arms, my fingers tightening round the great smooth melons. The others were shaggly loose-mouthed riverloafers. At first they laughed and yelled at me for my clumsiness but then I caught the knack and we worked smoothly as a song. When the boat was loaded, I sat full of sweat on the edge of the wharf, looking down into the swirling river. All down the river, all over the world, work and fatigue flowed in a rhythm like a song.

DAD

Listen to 'em talk. I'm a burden to 'em, that's what I am.

PROFESSOR

[*Getting to his feet.*] Well, it's time I began my five subconscious hours. As we get nearer to death, we sleep less. Probably we are saving up for the long sleep ahead.

DAD

And the boys not home yet, up to no good a night like this. And they'll come home all busy thinking what they've been doing, what they're going to do tomorrow. They won't notice me. I can't get 'em to talk to me any more. Haven't for years. They're like people drunk with some new terrible drink. What

is it they're drunk with all the time? They'd pay attention if they found me hanging there in the old ramshackle house next door.

MARCONI STEINMETZ EDISON BURBANK TURNER,

Noted inventor a suicide. Sons held for examination. Daughter prostrated. Every word of it headlines. Inventor of Cyrus H. Turner's Rotary Alcohol Engine, of Turner's Dumbwater Sanitary Contrivances, of the Ketcham Machicoulated Mousetrap, the Simplex Spiral Potatopeeler, the Saniform Toothbrush, the Eureka Toothpick, the Vermex Mosquito Tangle and Flykiller, the Subterfuge Cold Light Lamp. The Turner Easitie Slipknot, patent applied for. . . . [*He goes out back.*]

[*Cop chases kids across the stage.*]

KID

Aw, please mister police officer, let me have my nickel back.

COP

Get along wid yer, any more of your lip and I'll take you all to the station house. Playin' craps this time o' night. Ought to be in bed.

KID

Aw, mister, lemme have my nickel back.

[*Enter* EDDIE *and* EDNA *slowly walking down the street, hugging each other as they walk.*]

EDDY

You don't know so much, Edna.

EDNA

O, you think you know it all, don't you, just because you're talkin' of goin' to nightschool.

EDDY

Fellers know more'n girls, any way.

EDNA

Yeh?

EDDY

Talkin' to other fellers an' readin' newspapers an' books.

EDNA

Well, don't you think girls talk about things too?

EDDY

All girls do is talk silly.

EDNA

A lot you know about it. Why, you don't know enough to make a girl even if you had sense enough to want to.

EDDY

[*Gives her a long kiss.*] I haven't, have I?

EDNA

Rotten.

EDDY

After this I'm goin' into the city alone Saturday nights.

EDNA

I don't give a damn where you go.

EDDY

O, Edna.

EDNA

Don't you touch me.

EDDY

Honest, you're wonderful Edna, you're like Rene Adoree.

EDNA

Eddy, be yourself.

EDDY

Edna, come on in here quick, there's a cop at the corner. [*They kiss long and wrestling on the porch of the ramshackle house. Then they go inside. There is a pause.* EDNA *screams.*]

[EDDY's *voice.*] Shut up for Christ's sake. Get a knife.

[EDNA *runs out and across the stage screaming.*]

EDDY

[*Pounding on the door of the Turner's house.*] Say, Claude, Claude. [CLAUDE *comes out with an overcoat over his nightclothes followed by* MARTHA

and the PROFESSOR.] He's in there hangin' on a beam. I cut de rope an' he fell down.

CLAUDE

Martha, go back in the house.

[MARTHA *and the* PROFESSOR *stand on the porch,* EDDY *and* CLAUDE *go into the old house. He and* EDISON *carry* DAD *out.*]

EDDY

Maybe it's like drownin'. Maybe artificial respiration. For God's sake phone a hospital.

PROFESSOR

[*Examining the body that they have laid out on the porch steps.*] His neck's broken.

EDDY

I cut the rope an' he fell down all in a heap on the floor.

PROFESSOR

Not stiff yet.

[*A cop strides importantly across the stage.*]

CLAUDE

[*To the* COP.] A terrible accident has happened to Dad. Get an ambulance. Say, can't you say it was an accident?

MARTHA

[*Beginning to sob.*] O, Claude, what's the use of lying?

[*As crowds gather, the stage goes dark.*]

ACT II

(*Eight months later; inside the Turner's House; the living-room. The stage is set as it was for Act I except that the flat representing the house wall cut by two windows and a screen door that backed the porch has been taken away, leaving the room behind in sight, in which are indicated the main features of the standard American living-room. There is a door in the back leading into a hall to the dining-room and kitchen. The Atwater Kent on a table in back is in action, whining out an "inter-denominational" church service. As the lights go on for the opening of the act, a choir is singing "Holy, holy, holy".* CLAUDE *and the* PROFESSOR *sit reading the papers on each side of the porch.*)

CLAUDE

Well, the guy made a clean breast of it, says he was drunk at the time, says the woman kept him drunk all the time. He hid in her mother's room till the husband went to sleep, then they both went in and bent a sashweight round his head.

PROFESSOR

Riots in Poland, mobilization ordered in Jugo-Slavia, Korean agitators hanged, unrest in Barcelona.

CLAUDE

An' then he grabbed her and they was kissin' each other before he'd washed the blood off his hands . . . Here's the house. Funny, it looks kinder like our house. They were decent people, the feller had a good job. I wonder what gets hold of people.

PROFESSOR

So many bottles of nitroglycerin on a shelf. A heavy step and one of them drops and pop. . . . A scuffle and they all drop.

CLAUDE

It's all this damned agitation. They ought to stop it. Take this strike. All these reds skulking about. This feller carryin' on with Mart . . .

PROFESSOR

Every society carries within itself the seeds of its own decay.

CLAUDE

Look at the way Dad . . . I lost my job on that. It took me six months to get another. People won't stand for things like that and I don't blame 'em.

RADIO

You are now listening to the interdenominational services broadcasted by the Federation of Suburban churches through WXDZ. The service this morning will be conducted by Reverend Thaddeus D. Barnes-

cue of the Floral Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church.

CLAUDE

By gorry, it's late. They're startin' to broadcast the church services. Aren't you hungry for your breakfast? [*Calling through door.*] Mart, I wouldn't wait breakfast any longer.

MARTHA

[*At door.*] But Elmer said he really would come. You know he loves Sunday breakfast.

CLAUDE

Go ahead your own way. It's no use me trying to talk in this house.

RADIO

Let us pray, O Lord, we members of this great invisible audience gathered together each in our respective home far from each other in actuality but brought near by the wonders of science as we hope to be brought near in thee to the wonders of the spiritual life . . .

PROFESSOR

In a million cities they walk to work and back from work, and the machines hum and whine and are silent and all the while the thought grows in them. In the hearts of a million men the thought grows, in the whirring hearts of the machines there is a will.

RADIO

. . . that it may do its wonderwork not only in these little groups of loved ones gathered together with prayerful hearts over the length and breadth of the land but in the great world outside . . .

CLAUDE

Look here Mart. . . . Since Dad was taken I'm the head of the family, ain't I, cause I'm the oldest?

MARTHA

Well, you're certainly the oldest, Claude.

CLAUDE

Now look here . . . This damn sheeny Goldberg . . . It's got to stop.

RADIO

. . . making a great united family united in worship, united in service, so that with joyful hearts . . .

MARTHA

[*Turns off the radio.*] What's the use of talking? You just won't understand.

CLAUDE

I understand this thing too damn well. This business is likely to get the whole bunch of us in wrong. I'm liable to lose my job on account of it. You know the way a big bank is.

MARTHA

Claude, I've said again and again that I would not discuss it.

CLAUDE

This is a serious matter. It's not one of your charity picnics you're monkeying with now.

MARTHA

It's more serious than you realize.

CLAUDE

There are detectives trailing him every minute and the first thing you know he'll be in jail and you with him probably.

MARTHA

He's been in jail lots of times. That shows how little you know about it.

CLAUDE

How'd he get out?

MARTHA

Bail, silly.

CLAUDE

Well, you might have some consideration for us.

MARTHA

The trouble with me is I have too much consideration.

CLAUDE

Well, we support you, don't we?

MARTHA

You know perfectly well I'd have gone out and gotten a job ages ago only you boys thought it would break up your home. All right Claude, from here on I'm through.

CLAUDE

Well, let's have some breakfast, for heaven's sake. I've been up for two hours.

[ELMER *and* MAE *in evening clothes come trooping up the porch steps and into the room. They've evidently been out all night.*]

ELMER

Hello people, here we are.

MAE

So this is Paris.

ELMER

Excuse us if we give the impression that perhaps we've been drinking.

MAE

Dearie, we're plastered, absolutely plastered.

ELMER

Not absolutely.

CLAUDE

We've only waited breakfast for you about two hours.

MARTHA

I made popovers but I guess they're ruined.

ELMER

Sounds like the good old days, don't it? And Claude I asked a lot of people out here over Sunday.

CLAUDE

The hell you did. This isn't a place to ask high-hat friends to.

MAE

The Prince of Wales declined. I asked John D., and Chauncey Depew and a lot of other drunken bums. . . We asked the taximan too but he said he wasn't dressed for it.

CLAUDE

Say, we're talking pretty loud. I hope the neighbors are enjoying it.

ELMER

We feel like a million dollars. Isn't that so, Mae? Now he's sore at us. Don't be sore at us, Claude, old top. Everything's working out slick. I tell you there's money in it.

CLAUDE

In what?

ELMER AND MAE

In the air. [*They laugh as if they thought it was funny.*]

CLAUDE

You're drunk, both of you.

MAE

That's no way to talk to a lady.

ELMER

That's no lady, that's my wife.

MAE

Speak for yourself, young man.

ELMER

Well, old boy, everythin's runnin' as smooth as oil. Davis and a gang of his is going to float a corporation: all American Airways, Inc.

MARTHA

Go in and clean up the ruins of a noble breakfast. Everything's on the table. [*As they go through the door they start singing.*

Close the doors they're coming through the windows
Close the windows they're coming through the doors
Close the doors they're coming through the windows
My God! They're coming through the floor.

[MARTHA *lets herself drop in a chair with a sigh.* ELIZA DONAHUE *hurries in, stands hesitating at the top of the porch steps. She's out of breath and a little hysterical.*]

ELIZA

Has Comrade Goldberg been here? [MARTHA *shakes her head.*]

It's this big meeting to celebrate the fortieth week of the strike. The bosses are trying to break it up. There's dicks all over the place. One of 'em tried to get fresh with me an' I spat in his face, I spat in the middle of his dirty yellow face. I've got to get hold of Walter and I can't call him up on the phone cause they've tapped the wires at headquarters. I thought he might be here.

MARTHA

Sometimes he comes by for a minute about this time. Here he is . . .

[*Both women turn to* WALTER *eagerly as he comes up the steps.*]

ELIZA

I've been lookin' for you everywhere. Joe says they've sworn out a warrant. One of the company detectives told him so.

WALTER

Don't I know it. They're after me for inciting to riot and sedition now.

ELIZA

The bastards want to keep us from pulling off that meeting. Jesus, we got to.

WALTER

Sure we will, Eliza. They can arrest me after I've spoken. That'll go good in the papers. Look, will

you go back to headquarters an' tell 'em I'm keeping scarce till the meeting begins.

ELIZA

[*Glaring bitterly at* MARTHA.] I'll be going. Don't you let 'em get you Walter.

WALTER

An' tell everybody you see for God's sake to be orderly. Don't give the cops any excuse to beat up anybody.

ELIZA

[*Sarcastically.*] See you at the meeting . . . if you find time to drop around.

[*Goes down the steps and off.*]

MARTHA

[*Squeezing his shoulders for a minute.*] Hello, Walt. See what that woman doesn't think of me.

WALTER

[*Very serious.*] Mart, I want to talk to you. O, Mart, do you feel the way I do, that it's just ghastly horrible, us never really being together . . . just slipping away now and then like we were ashamed of each other.

MARTHA

I'm such a little coward.

WALTER

Mart, look here. Gee, I get sick of always trying to argue people into things. Somebody's got to lead them and now that I'm started I can't back out of it. It isn't much of a life.

MARTHA

You like the feeling of power it gives you.

WALTER

Do you like the feeling of power you have over me? I know I haven't got much to offer. No money, no time to enjoy anything. I'll probably be in jail before this is over; they'll probably frame me on some darn thing or other. If I could feel that you belonged to me, that you were leading some sort of a decent life instead of being a slavey to this bunch of bums. I don't mean belonged . . . you know what I mean.

MARTHA

There are so many nice young girls; I'm almost an old maid. All those feelings must have been kind of frozen up in me.

WALTER

I've thawed them out a little, haven't I, Mart? [*She nods her head a little.*] O, Mart, you seem so leisurely about everything. There's no time.

MARTHA

I've always thought there was all the time in the world.

WALTER

It's a state of war. We're like people trying to make love on a battlefield.

MARTHA

All right, Walt, maybe I'm going to be able to try.

WALTER

Mart, I get so sick of trying to argue people into things. Don't make me have to do it with you.

MARTHA

But it's so hard. O, Walter, I'm so miserable.

EDDY

[*From door.*] Say, Mart, they want some more coffee.

WALTER

[*Kisses her.*] Mart, I'm coming for you some time this evening, or else I'll send you a telegram. You're coming and you're never going back.

MARTHA

[*In a small voice.*] All right.

[WALTER *goes down the porch steps and out.*]

EDDY

Well, of all the gall.

MARTHA

Shut up, you damn little fool. [*She slaps his face. She goes into the other room, slamming the door.*]

EDDY

Say, what do you think this is? That hurt . . . Jesus Christ, she must be fallin' for that guy. [*He settles down with the funny paper on the settee.*]

[EDNA *and* EVE *cross the stage talking.*]

EDNA

No, I'm goin' to the beach.

EVE

Who's goin' to take ya?

EDNA

O, plenty of fellers would if they had the chance.

EVE

I'm going to the strike meeting. You would, too, if you had any feeling of solidarity.

EDNA

Solidarity applesauce . . . Broiled live lobster and Tom Collins it'll be if I find the right feller.

EVE

Elmer's home.

EDNA

Let's stop and say hello.

EVE

[*Hustling off.*] I haven't the time. So long.

EDDY

[*Emerging from behind the funny paper.*] Hello, Edna . . . Well, have a heart. . . . You might say good morning to a feller.

EDNA

No, I won't . . . I'm off you Eddy, and you know why, too.

EDDY

Honest, I don't, Edna.

EDNA

I saw you in Roseland with that bunch of five and ten cent store cakeeaters.

EDDY

Honest, I didn't see you, Edna . . . When you get a new job you pick up with a new crowd, that's all. I'm goin' to move in to the city. I'm sick of this dump.

EDNA

[*Scornfully.*] A counterjumper . . . I didn't come to see you, anyway. Hello, Martha. I didn't think I'd find you still eatin' breakfast. Excuse my buttin' in. [*She goes in through the door.*]

[EDDY *sits down in the rocking chair whistling "This is my lucky day".*]

DAVIS

[*As he comes up the steps.*] Hello, Eddy, what's new? Where's your brother?

EDDY

Still inside eatin' breakfast, Mr. Davis.

DAVIS

[*Settles down ponderously into a rocker.*] Well, I won't disturb them. The others will be along soon. I don't suppose Elmer's forgotten we were coming out to have this little conference with him, has he, eh? Well, Edison, I haven't seen you for quite a while . . . What are you up to these days? Still going to night school?

EDDY

Got a job in a shoe store.

DAVIS

Well, I'm not sure it wasn't wise . . . a good clean job . . . this is the age of the white collar man. And a lot of fancy education don't help any. Wasn't education that put me where I am today. Wasn't education made Elmer nail down all those world records, was it? It was . . . Yes sir, it was pure unadulterated . . .

[McGovern, *a fat, small-time lawyer, with a bald head, comes in.*]

Hello, McGovern . . . This is the house . . . Sit

right down, Elmer'll be out directly . . . This is Edison, his kid brother . . .

MCGOVERN

How do you do, sir?

EDDY

I'll tip 'em off you're here. [*He goes out through the house.*]

[ELMER'S *and* MAE'S *voices singing*:

"Shut the windows they're coming through the doors
My God! They're coming through the floor.

The song stops suddenly. You can hear EDDY *cry* "Shut up you bums."]

[BLOOMSTEIN *and* KLEIN *come in oilily.*]

KLEIN

Good morning, gentlemen. . . .

BLOOMSTEIN

I don't like all this agitation . . . all these meetings and special deputies and such. Bad for business, I tell yer.

MCGOVERN

O well, it's all in a lifetime. Let 'em talk, they can't do anything. They'll whack an injunction on 'em and then . . . zip.

BLOOMSTEIN

All this knocking's bad for business, destroys confidence . . . Confidence is the foundation . . .

DAVIS

Gentlemen, let us get down to our muttons as they say in the old country . . . and our business today is promotion.

ELMER

[*Comes out and shakes hands all around.*] Good morning, gents . . . When do I start building my boat? I've got blueprints of her.

DAVIS

New York to Chi in eight hours, rain or shine, isn't that so?

KLEIN

Mere commuting.

BLOOMSTEIN

Certainly the airplane has great possibilities for commuting. Southampton and the exclusive south shore resorts within reach of the man of moderate means.

ELMER

Sure thing.

MCGOVERN

Gentlemen, it would be superfluous to explain to you that we are here for the promotion of an Amer-

ican system of express and accident proof airways. This corporation will, I firmly believe, fulfill a great scientific and patriotic duty and I hope will not be devoid of profit for the stockholders.

ELMER

Hear, hear . . . and how about the pilots?

DAVIS

Don't mind him. . . It's the spring in the air.

[*A little parade of children passes by the front of the house singing*:

"Two, four, six, eight
Who do we appreciate?
Goldberg!"

the COP *appears and shakes his club at them and they all run.* EDNA *and* EDDY *come round from the back of the house.*]

EDNA

Even the kids are doin' it. Don't it jar you?

COP

[*Goes off, grumbling.*] This town's gone crazy.

EDDY

They say they've raised a fund of two million dollars to put over the strike.

EDNA

Who did?

EDDY

The Reds . . . you can do anything with money.

EDNA

That's a lot of applesauce. They haven't got any money. That's what's the matter with them.

[EDDY *and* EDNA *sit down cuddlingly on the bottom of the porch steps.* STRIKERS, *singing offstage, very low*:

O when you're up, you're up
And when you're down, you're down
But when you're against the strikers
You're upside down.]

MCGOVERN

Here are the details. Please correct me if I err. The corporation is to be known as All-American Airways, Inc. . . .

ELMER

Correct.

[*Strikers sing louder*:

But when you're against the strikers,
You're upside down."]

MCGOVERN

. . . with a capital stock of five million dollars of which fifty-one percent shall be known and designated as common stock and shall be distributed among the officers of the organization as shall hereafter be designated . . .

ELMER

[*Jocosely.*] Now you're talking.

DAVIS

That don't mean what you think it means, Elmer. A concern has to be incorporated somehow. It's all just on paper.

[*The corners of the stage and the space between the houses has begun to fill up with silent, shuffling men and women, the overflow from a huge meeting being held in the lots behind the house, from which, now and then, a growl of laughter, or cheering or a rattle of hand-claps.*

AMARI, *an old, white-headed Italian, climbs up the scaffolding of the new house and starts to make a speech. This speech fills in the gaps in the talks of the promoters in the house. He talks first to one side and then the other. The only parts of the speech the audience can hear are those spoken when he is facing them.*]

AMARI

Look at my hands, friends. . . . It is eight months that they do not work. Look at the big looms in the mills, friends, it is eight months that they say no word.

MCGOVERN

[*Talking very fast.*] The remaining 49 per cent of which one third shall be designated as common and two thirds as preferred stock shall be put on the market in due course through the firm of Levy and Atkinson, which I have the honor of representing at this meeting.

MAE

[*Appearing in door.*] Say, Elmer, Martha says there's nothing to drink in the house. I'll be feeling awful sick if I don't have a hair of the dog that bit me.

ELMER

[*Without looking up.*] Call Evergreen 0024 and tell 'em to send round a bottle of Scotch. It's just around the corner.

AMARI

Company think to own mills, think to own our hands. . . . That is what it means to strike, to show that worker is the industry, not the boss. [*Cheers,* AMARI *drops off the scaffolding.*]

MCGOVERN

The promotion of the said stock shall be as hereafter arranged by the designated officers. To the above preliminary agreement we hereby set our hands and seals, etc., etc. . . .

DAVIS

Are we all set?

ELMER

Who's got a fountain pen?

DAVIS

Here you are [*Rubbing his hands.*]

BOOTLEGGER

[*Comes up the porch steps with suitcase.*] Hello Elmer.

ELMER

Hello George . . . say. . . . Charge it to me. So long.

BOOTLEGGER

Jez, there's goin' to be hell to pay round this town this afternoon. Sheriff Corrigan's at the station now unpacking machine guns for his special deputies. The strikers are going to get theirs, I tell yer . . . Well, so long.

KLEIN

They're all damn foreigners. They ought to be deported.

ELMER

Don't you want to see my blueprints? Honest, it's a wonderful boat. She ought to have a cruising speed of a hundred and forty-five an hour.

DAVIS

[*Absentmindedly.*] Yes, just a minute. We might have a little . . . er . . . [*Makes a gesture of lifting a glass.*] to the success of our enterprise.

ELMER

Come right ahead. [*He starts uncorking a bottle.*]

DAVIS

Let's step into the dining-room, gentlemen.

ELMER

[*Calls.*] Mart we need some glasses.

[MARTHA *opens the door.*]

MARTHA

Come right in, gentlemen.

[KLEIN, BLOOMSTEIN *and* MCGOVERN *go out through the door in the back.*]

ELMER

[*To* DAVIS.] Here they are, Dave, on this table.

DAVIS

What?

ELMER

The prints for that plane.

DAVIS

Splendid, my boy, splendid. . . .

[*Patting him on the shoulder.*] Well lets give the girls a little drink. [*He goes in the door.*]

[ELMER *stands alone dejectedly looking at the blueprints.*]

EDDY

Say, they're drinkin' highballs in there. Maybe if we went back. . . .

EDNA

To hell wid 'em. Let's go on a party all alone. Let's go down to the beach.

EDDY

I thought you was sore at me, Edna.

EDNA

I am, but I can't stick around here any more. All these strikers give me the creeps. You ought to see the crowds on Central Boulevard. How do they get that way?

EDDY

Jez, I haven't much jack on me.

EDNA

Oh, we'll make out somehow. I've got a couple o' dollars. I know the kind o' cheap skate I'm goin' with.

EDDY

Anyway, it's better than hangin' round this dump.

[*They go off. A messenger boys comes in the other side, and stands at the foot of the porch steps.*]

ELMER

All right, come right in. We've got some messages for you.

MESSENGER BOY

Well, they're marchin' up the police reserves. . . . Golly, there' an awful lot o' people parked in that empty lot.

ELMER

[*Letting himself drop on the porch steps.*] O, it's a hell of a business.

STRIKERS

[*Men's voices out back.*] We work to eat to get the strength to work to eat to get the strength to work to eat to get the strength to work to eat to get the strength to work. . . . [*Yells.*]

MAE

Why, what's the trouble, Elmer?

ELMER

Those bastards, they don't give a damn about anything.

MAE

Why. . . .

ELMER

They don't give a damn about me or aviation or anything. All they see is a chance to scoop up some easy cash.

MAE

That's all right, dearie, as long as you get your share, what's the kick?

ELMER

Well, I'm not kicking. . . . They make me goddam sore, that's all.

MAE

But Davis is a good friend of yours. You owe him a lot, Elmer.

ELMER

He never risked his neck or sat up all night designing a new type of control.

MAE

Elmer, if you get a sour drunk on, I'll never forgive you. You ought to be feeling good. Isn't this the greatest thing that ever happened to you?

ELMER

What?

MAE

This company and everything.

ELMER

I suppose it'll mean a lot of jack if those babies don't sop it all up.

MAE

And how about that house down in Florida?

ELMER

How'd it be to fly down there?

MAE

When?

ELMER

Right now, today. . . . Dave'll let us go down to his place. We'd get down there in the morning without any nightflying either. It'd be slick. . . . There wouldn't be anybody there and we could have the time of our lives swimmin' and fishin' and everythin'.

MAE

But how could we? I haven't any clothes.

ELMER

Come ahead, be a good kid. We'll have a peach of a time. You know it'll be grand, there'll even be a moon. You know . . . all the stuff about the tropical moon under the cocoanut palms. We'll leave them to fix it up about the corporation an' all that bunk. I'll leave a power of attorney with Dave.

MAE

No, I can't Elmer. Some other time I'd love to. When the season's on. I'm no Robinson Crusoe looking for a desert isle.

[MARTHA *is standing in the little space between the houses looking back at the crowd filling the vacant lots behind the house.* [*Clapping, cheering, yells.*]

WALTER

[*Has come up behind* MARTHA.] Hello, Mart.

MARTHA

I was looking for you on the stand where the speakers are.

WALTER

[*He's thinking of the speech he is going to make; preoccupied with what he's going to say.*] Just on my way. Well, it'll take 'em quite a while to bust up this meeting.

MARTHA

I was afraid they'd put you off the lot.

WALTER

Haven't got the nerve. Maybe it's a sign that public sentiment is beginning to swing our way.

MARTHA

I wish it was all over . . . all this. . . . I'm so worried about you.

WALTER

I'm fine. I'm going to try not to get arrested. Maybe we'll spend the evening together.

MARTHA

The Chamber of Commerce has hired a plane of Elmer's to drop leaflets on your head.

WALTER

If they distributed dollar bills it wouldn't do any good now.

MARTHA

O, I wish it was all over.

WALTER

I wish you and me could be together quiet somewhere. . . . You know those feelings. . . . It's terrible to have no time for each other.

MARTHA

You give them so much of yourself . . . these crowds . . . these meetings. . . . There's only the littlest bit left for me.

WALTER

Sure there is. . . . We're big enough for both things. . . . Well, here goes. We've got to show 'em we're not scared whatever happens.

AMARI'S VOICE

[*Coming from behind the house.*] Company owns your days and your nights; company owns our beds

and our houses and our cookstoves, but the company don't own the good weather an' the sky. . . .

[*Cheering.* MARTHA *and* WALTER *are lost in the tense listening crowd.*]

ELMER

[*On the steps.*] Nobody'll do a damn thing I want.

MAE

Sure I will, kid . . . only you ought to be reasonable. Let's go back an' have a little drink. . . .

DAVIS

[*Bursting out of the dining-room with a telegraph blank in his hand.*] Take a squint at this Elmer before the boy goes with it. I'm sending this to a list of fellers I know who know me at various press agencies. . . . I'll get a regular publicity staff on the trail tomorrow, but when you want something done well there's nothing like doing it yourself, isn't that so, Mae?

MAE

[*Starting to play up to him.*] It certainly is.

DAVIS

Here, I'll read it to you. "Several men prominent in financial and real estate circles. . . .

AMARI'S VOICE

[*Drowning out* DAVIS.] Look up in the sky an' see the clouds; company don't own the clouds. Send

aeroplanes up, but don't own the sky, not yet. We are finish being the slave of the company, is that true? It is spring, soon it will be good summer weather, if the company throw us out of our houses, we will go and live in the woods like Indian.

DAVIS

[*Continues reading.*] . . . at the home of Elmer Turner, daring young aviator, holder of the world's speed record for heavily loaded planes who recently captured the altitude record for single passenger planes which he still holds, to discuss plans for the founding of a corporation to promote aerial passenger and express service in this country, to be known as All American Airways, Inc. At the close of the meeting, Jonathan P. Davis, well known Florida realtor and promoter, chairman of the Citizen's Fair-play League, which was founded last year to restore mutual confidence between the real estate operator and the public, said a few words.

[*Growing sounds of crowd off stage, singing, "Oh, if you're up you're up" and "Solidarity Forever."*]

AMARI'S VOICE

[*Very loud.*] It is very nice for workers to have vacation, to go in woods, breathe good air, bathe in clean water, come back full of fight for decent wages, decent living. Strike is workers' vacation.

[*Yells, singing.*]

DAVIS

. . . the responsible business men of this country put their shoulders to the wheel. It is in response to this universal demand that we are founding today, All American Airways. [*He finishes up as if he were addressing a large and enthusiastic audience. Then he turns to* ELMER *and* MAE *and hands the paper to the* MESSENGER.] Like it? . . . All right boy, scoot. . . .

ELMER

[*Over the crowd.*] Funny I don't see that plane. . . . Tom was going to drop leaflets.

DAVIS

With the publicity your name gives us, Elmer, it'll be the greatest thing since . . . since. . . . Well, just one little drink and we'll all go out to lunch.

[VOICES *start yelling:* "We work to eat to get the strength to work to eat to get the strength to work to eat. . . ." *Yelling and clapping, then children's voices:*

"Two, four, six, eight,
Who do we appreciate?
Goldberg!"

MARTHA *walks slowly around and back to the porch.* MCGOVERN *and* KLEIN *are hurrying out.*]

KLEIN

Goodbye, Miss Turner, thanks for your charming hospitality.

MC GOVERN

I can't see why Davis insists on hanging around there.

KLEIN

Rank foolhardiness. . . .

MCGOVERN

You can't tell what might happen. [*They hustle off.*]

[*The stage is full of strikers, plainclothes men and special deputies. A man walks back and forth selling Eskimo pies. Phone rings in the house.*]

ELMER

[*Talking on the phone in the back hall. The door is now open.*] Sure, I'll run right over there.

[ELMER *comes out on the porch.* DAVIS *shouts after him from inside.*]

DAVIS

But Elmer, stick around, we're just tuning in on Guava Hill Radio hour.

[MAE *follows him out on the street. She's almost in tears.*]

MAE

But Elmer, don't leave me alone here with this bunch of flat tires. [*She sees* MARTHA *and catches herself and turns away.*]

ELMER

[*To* MARTHA.] I've got a little job to do for Tommy. . . I'll be back in an hour.

MARTHA

You're not going to distribute those Chamber of Commerce leaflets, are you?

ELMER

Why not?

MARTHA

O, Elmer, I don't want you to do that. It's helping jump on a man when he's down.

ELMER

It's all hokum. I don't see that it hurts the strikers any. Tommy's sick in bed an' they're paying him a hundred bucks an hour for doing the trick an' he needs the money.

MARTHA

But Walter thinks so much of you. . . .

ELMER

So that's how the wind lies, is it? Well, I need a little spin. I'll loop a couple of loops for 'em. There's a big crowd out there. I'll put on a show for 'em.

MAE

You won't find me here when you come back.

ELMER

You can go to Ballyhack for all I care, you and Dave, goddamn your hides. Gee, I'm gettin' a head. . . . I need a little push up the hill before running out to the field. [*Goes in door in back.*] Hey, Dave, give us a drink.

VENDORS

[*Yelling.*] Eskimo Pie. . . . Eskimo Pie. . . .

STRIKERS

[*Singing.*]

"Oh, when you're up, you're up
And when you're down, you're down
But when you're against the strikers
You're upside down."

MAE

He's drunk, that's what's the matter with him.

[MARTHA *and* MAE *look bitterly at each other without saying a word.*]

DAVIS

[*Coming out from the back room.*] Say, what have you girls done to Elmer? He went off out back on his bike with a face like a thundercloud.

MARTHA

Nothing. This is a small house, it won't hold so many, that's all.

PROFESSOR

[*Comes out with a newspaper in his hand and sits down in the porch rocker.*] If I had all the words I'd let out of my mouth all my life, if they were all dollars, if they were all rifles, if they were all airplanes. All the indignant words to the international proletariat.

VENDORS

Eskimo Pie. . . . Eskimo Pie. . . .

[CLAUDE *comes indignantly round the side of the house.*]

CLAUDE

It's a damned outrage. . . . They're sitting all along the back fence. They're climbing all over the roof of the garage.

[*He sits in the opposite rocker.*]

VOICES

[*Yelling.*] Goldberg! Goldberg!

(SHERIFF *and four deputies come on and stand left.* CLAUDE *runs up to him and starts talking excitedly.* MARTHA *is leaning out of the porch to see back.*]

WALTER

[*Voice from off stage.*] The bosses of the Hartshorn mills refuse to pay any attention to your demands. They refuse to allow you to live decently, to

bring up your children decently. We will not be terrorized.

[*Cheers.*]

SHERIFF

That's him now. We'll get him good this time.

PROFESSOR

Flinging words in the face of dollars.
Flinging words in the face of guns.

VENDORS

Hot dogs . . . piping hot dogs . . . Eskimo pie . . . Eskimo pie. . . .

WALTER

[*Climbs upon the scaffolding, so that he is in sight of the audience.*] The bosses refuse to recognize your union. Instead they bribe the cops to club you into submission. This is their defiance that they throw in the face of the working class. Look, there's an airplane overhead now, dropping leaflets to bully you. Are you going to let yourselves be bullied? Are you going to let yourselves be clubbed into submission? This is no time for speeches. I ask you one question: Are we going to fight?

[*A tremendous roar of cheering and the hum of an airplane.*]

SHERIFF

Well, boys, I've heard enough. I'm going out there and read the riot act. [*Blows his whistle.*]

[*Cheering, singing, yells.*]

MARTHA

They're all waving their union cards.

PROFESSOR

Red cards shaking in the wind. . . .

BLOOMSTEIN

[*Pops out through door and tumbles down the steps. He is drunk.*] Look here Davis, we've got to stop this. . . . All of it . . . it can't go on. . . . It'll get in the papers . . . it'll destroy confidence . . . it'll restrict enterprise . . . drive away business. . . .

DAVIS

It's the melting pot bubbling, that's all.

MARTHA

They're breaking up the meeting. . . . They're clubbing them. . . .

[*Whistles, yells of "Cossacks, Scabs," tinging-ling-ling of a patrol wagon. A rain of pink and green handbills drops over the stage.*]

DAVIS

[*Picks one up.*] "Friends, workers in the Hartshorn Mills. Foreign hired agitators are trying to mislead you. Law and order is to the interests of all citizens. Law and order means prosperity for all.

Glenside Chamber of Commerce."

Very good. Might have written it myself. There ought to be some newspaper boys around. I'd like to give out an interview.

RADIO

The right time is twelve forty five, twelve forty five Eastern Standard time. Station WXDZ. . . . We will now broadcast the Radio Hour of the Guava Hill Gardens Development Company, station WXDZ, broadcasting. Stand by for the Guava Hill hour. . . . The first selection on the program is. . . .

DAVIS

[*Rubbing his hands.*] There we are. That's the proper stuff.

BLOOMSTEIN

[*Splutters.*] It ought to be stopped. . . . It destroys confidence.

MARTHA

[*Comes to sit down on the steps beside the* PROFESSOR *miserably.*] He's doing stunts up there above the crowd. Elmer's such a kid, he oughtn't be allowed to run a dangerous machine like an airplane. . . .

VOICES

Say the Sheriff's reading the riot act . . . riot act . . . riot act. . . .

[*Hoots and boos from the crowd, then three shots and silence except for the hum of the*

airplane motor and the SHERIFF'S *voice which continues through following speeches.*]

READING THE NEW JERSEY RIOT ACT

RADIO

[*A faraway contralto is singing.*]

I know a spot where the sun is like gold
And the cherry blooms burst with snow
And down underneath is the loveliest nook
Where the fourleaf clovers grow. . . .

MARTHA

The darn fool, what right has he to come down low like that among the houses?

DAVIS

He's breaking the meeting up all right. . . . They're all looking at him instead of listening to the riot act. Talk about restoring confidence. There, sir, is confidence in the making. That's what I call publicity. It's the greatest stunt since they killed Lincoln.

BLOOMSTEIN

But that won't keep this rioting out of the papers. Who'll buy Glenside lots now?

MARTHA

But he's so low. . . .

PROFESSOR

The motor sounds wrong, there is something the matter with the machine.

(*People run across the stage, looking up and back.*]

DAVIS

He must have had a tip from the cops to charge down on the crowd. That'll disperse them all right.

MARTHA

He's climbing again, but there is something the matter. . . .

DAVIS

He's gone into a tailspin. . . . My God, he'll never come out of that. . . . No, by golly, I think he'll make a landing. [*He runs after the crowd. The stage is empty except for* MARTHA *and the* PROFESSOR.]

PROFESSOR

Every society bears within itself the seeds of its own decay.

[*The crowd of strikers surges back across the stage being clubbed and beaten by the cops.*]

SHERIFF

[*Marching in with a melodramatic stride.*] It's a disgrace to the township . . . ought to have dispersed two hours ago. [*A shot, followed by other shots.*] My God, what's that?

WALTER

[*Comes in breathless.*] Look here, Sheriff, none of our boys fired that shot.

SHERIFF

Arrest that man. . . . If here ain't young hopeful himself.

WALTER

I'm not trying to run away . . . but for God's sake stop that shooting . . . the crowd's dispersing.

SHERIFF

Why didn't they disperse when they was told to?

WALTER

How could they, with your bulls pushing 'em back into the lot? Call your thugs off and they'll go home all right.

SHERIFF

Well, what can I do? I've got to maintain law 'n order. See how they bawled me out in the town meeting last night?

MARTHA

[*To* CLAUDE, *who has just come in.*] Claude, what's happened to Elmer? Tell me.

CLAUDE

He's not dead. They're takin' him to the hospital.

MARTHA

Badly hurt?

CLAUDE

Yes.

MARTHA

Do you know where he is? Let's go to the hospital. . . . Walter, call me up when they bail you out.

SHERIFF

Ain't goin' to be any bailin' out on this charge. No sir, we got you where we want you now. Look in his pockets.

CLAUDE

I should say not. This was your fault, you son of a bitch. Elmer never crashed, he was shot down.

SHERIFF

Well, if that ain't a gun, I'm a Dutchman. Break it.

MARTHA

I'm all for you, Walter.

SHERIFF

[*Snatches gun from cop.*] Lemme have it. Hmm, still hot. [*Shakes the cartridges out into his hand.*] You shot four shots out of it.

WALTER

Of course I didn't. One of your dicks slipped it in my pocket.

SHERIFF

[*Laughing.*] We'll see how the Grand Jury feels about that.

MARTHA

I'm all for you, Walter.

CLAUDE

For God's sake, Sis, Elmer's dying. [*They go off.*]

WALTER

Professor, you saw what happened. I'll need you as a witness.

COP

[*Twisting* WALTER's *arm back and kicking him with his knee.*] All right, brother, march.

WALTER

Call up headquarters and tell 'em what happened, please. Tell 'em to go ahead. . . .

COP

Shut yer lousy mug.

PROFESSOR

In the name of humanity, I protest.

[COP *brings his club down on* PROFESSOR's *skull. He falls limp to the porch steps.* SHERIFF *and cops go off with* WALTER.]

[*A crowd rushes across the stage crying: "Lynch him. He killed* ELMER TURNER.

Lynch the Reds. They shot down ELMER TURNER." *The light narrows to* DAVIS *at the telephone in the hallway.*]

DAVIS

Yes sir . . . injuries very slight. . . . Just a little accident . . . might happen to anybody. . . . No, of course not, Elmer Turner will be general manager of the entire concern. And, Al, please, if you can get in something like this . . . Elmer Turner, record holder, etcetera, etcetera, General Manager of All-American Airways, Inc. etcetera, on being interviewed after his accident said something like this. . . . Do you get me? . . . Industrial unrest . . . er . . . industrial unrest is the gravest danger to be faced by our country today. The restoration of confidence in our ideals, in our government that has stood up against the slings and arrows of two hundred invidious years . . . you know, and the credit system and confidence in the unbounded possibilities of commercial aviation . . . and end up on an intimate note, something like this. I'm in this Game boys, and I'm in to stay. . . .

(*Blackout*)

ACT III

Scene I

[*An alcove in a Chinese Restaurant is indicated in the center of front stage. Jazz played softly off stage.* Edison Turner *and a little shingle-headed girl have just come back from dancing.*]

GLADYS

Jimminy, my feet are tired.

EDDY

Dancin' rests you up, don't it?

GLADYS

It ain't the dancin', it's Woolworth's.

EDDY

I'm not tired.

GLADYS

You needn't talk. All you do is sit down and fit shoes on people's feet. . . . I bet you see some god-awful lookin' knees.

EDDY

No, I'm in the men's side.

GLADYS

Is that the kind of feller you are?

EDDY

Want to try and find out?

GLADYS

You needn't talk big. . . . You're not such a red-hot sheik.

EDDY

You girls think you're awful clever, don't you?

GLADYS

[*Snuggling up to him.*] We know we've got more sense than a feller has, deary. . . . Say, I wanted to ask you somethin'. . . .

EDDY

[*Coolly.*] What is it, sweetheart?

GLADYS

Say, you knew this feller Walter Goldberg, didn't you? The feller they convicted of murder?

EDDY

That socialist they arrested in the riot out home? No, I never knew him. I guess he'll get his all right.

GLADYS

Well, Edna says he used to be round your house all the time . . . he was your sister's heavy, wasn't he?

EDDY

You leave my sister out of it.

GLADYS

Hey, cut the big line. I just wanted to know somethin' about him, see.

EDDY

O, I don't know anythin' about him.

GLADYS

[*Thoughtfully.*] Murder in the first degree. . . . Jez, the papers was full of him. [*The music has stopped.* EDNA *and a tall, dark young man with slick hair parted in the middle, come back dancing.*] Say, Edna, he won't loosen up about that Goldberg guy.

EDNA

I can tell yer all about him. I used to work out at the Hartshorn Mills.

GROVE

He sure is goin' to get what's comin' to him.

EDNA

Well, there was a big strike over there, see, and they were damn right. The work was terrible and they gypped you right and left. I wouldn't work there again, not for a million dollars. And this feller Goldberg turns up and starts organizin'. . . .

GROVE

I guess he got big money out of it.

EDNA

Sure, he musta got somethin' out of it. Most of the time he had a car and a feller to drive him around.

GROVE

Did he have a good car?

EDDY

Naw, first he had a Ford, and then they got him a Chevrolet. He wasn't any spender, he was a tightwad.

GLADYS

Saving his money to get married, I guess.

EDDY

Say, lay off for chrissake. . . .

EDNA

But everybody said he was gettin' big money. . . . Those guys always get money from somewheres. They wouldn't be in it if they didn't.

GROVE

Maybe they get it from Russia.

GLADYS

[*With a shiver.*] Must be terrible to be electrocuted . . . an' for a young guy like that. . . .

EDDY

He's not so young. He's more than thirty, I guess.

GLADYS

His pictures look kinda goodlookin'.

EDNA

I wouldn't say he was goodlookin'. . . . He didn't have any class to him. Eddy an' me saw him just before he was arrested. Remember that day we went out to the beach, and a flat tire you turned out to be, will I forget it? He was there on the porch of your house talkin' to Mart . . . Mart's Eddy's sister. . . . Say, Eddy, how's Elmer?

EDDY

He's still pretty sick, I guess. I don't go out there no more. I don't get along wid dat bunch.

EDNA

Jez, it was a wonder the police didn't raid that place. And the old guy widde whiskers. . . . He was nobody's business.

EDDY

Yeah, things kinda went to pieces out there after Dad. . . .

[*A kind of constraint falls on them.*]

GROVE

Where's 'at damn chink? Let's eat some more chop suey.

EDNA

I want sweet and pungent.

GROVE

Wait, there's nobody lookin'. . . . Have a drink. [*He passes a flask around, the girls make faces.*] A guy I know gave it to me. . . . It's the real stuff. . . . He wouldn't sell stuff like that, see, keeps it to give to his friends.

EDNA

[*Laughing a little hysterically.*] Where did I hear that line before? That's a lot of hooey but it goes to the right place, don't it, Gladys?

GROVE

Say, let's dance, Gladys.

EDNA

We'll order when the chink comes. [*They dance off.*] Well, Eddy, how do you like the girlfriend?

EDDY

She's all right, I guess.

EDNA

You're not givin' her much lovin'.

EDDY

Aw, hell. . . . Why do you girls always pick on a feller? Always nag, nag nag. You keep a feller fooling around until you can put the hooks on him an'

then it's love, honor and obey for the rest of your life. . . . Well, there none of 'em goin' to get their hooks on me.

EDNA

How do you know we're so anxious, dearie?

EDDY

I didn't mean anything about me especially. They're after your payslip, that's what I mean.

EDNA

Well, your payslip ain't so fat. . . . Say, you need a new hat, Eddy, your head must be swellin'.

EDDY

Now you've got me all bawled up.

EDNA

I turned down a feller wid a car, a regular sugar daddy for this date with you two cheap skates. . . .

EDDY

Let's dance, Edna, and forget it.

[*They dance off. Chinese waiter comes and puts back another plate on table, tidies it up.* GROVE *and* GLADYS *come back.*]

GROVE

Say, I said only one order.

WAITER

We don't serve single orders for four.

GROVE

But we already had two orders.

GLADYS

O, we can eat it all right, Grove.

GROVE

Get sick if you eat too much of that stuff.
[*Waiter goes.*]

GLADYS

Oh, I love that tune. . . . Oo, my legs are fallin' off.

GROVE

[*Pulling her to him on the seat.*] Quick, before they come back. . . . [*They kiss passionately, so that they upset a glass of water.*]

GROVE

Aw, hell.
[GLADYS *puts her hands up to her face with a little shudder.* WAITER *comes back growling and takes away empty glass, mops up table.*]
[To WAITER.] Sorry, old top. [*They kiss again.*]

GLADYS

[*Pulling off from him.*] But suppose that feller never did have a gun, suppose the cops planted it on him.

GROVE

That guy Goldberg . . . well, he was an agitator, wasn't he? Sure he must have had a gun . . . I've toted a gun myself many a time.

GLADYS

Lemme see it.

GROVE

Sure I will.

[*Whispers in her ear.*]

GLADYS

No, lay off that, Grove, you're talkin' out of your turn. Edna's your date tonight. I bet Eddy's sister must feel awful bad. I would if a feller I'd gone round with was convicted of murder . . . even if I didn't like him any more . . . Jimminy, things like that are terrible. And a guy like that who'll stand up and talk back at 'em. Let 'em have it right between the eyes.

[EDNA *and* EDDY *settle down at the table again.*]

EDNA

Take your boyfriend, Gladys, I don't want him.

EDDY

Edna hasn't quit pickin' on me all evenin'.

EDNA

Say, Gladys.

[GROVE *gets up to let* GLADYS *out. The two girls go off to the ladies' room together.*]

GROVE

[*Pulling out flask.*] Say, let's you an' me finish this up.

EDDY

Cheesus, Edna makes me sore.

GROVE

Say, what about Edna, will she come across all right?

EDDY

Sure.

GROVE

You an' her ever . . .

EDDY

Sure, when we was kids we used to . . . hundreds a' times . . . her an' me went round together a coupla years . . . I was just a kid, see. She got me young, see . . . But I laid off that stuff . . .

GROVE

That won't last.

EDDY

All they want is to make you spend your money on 'em and if you get caught it's love, honor and obey for the rest of your life.

GROVE

Hell, man, the frail ain't livin' who can put the grapplin' hooks on me, not at twenty-two a week.

EDDY

Let's you an' me give 'em the air an' go to a movie or somethin'.

GROVE

We might walk out on 'em widout payin' the check. That'd be good.

EDDY

Chinks got his eye on us . . . We'd never get away wid it.

GROVE

All right, how much is the check? We got to make it speedy.

EDDY

Hey, waiter, let's have the check.

GROVE

How much is it?

[WAITER *comes in and lays check on table.*]

EDDY

Two and a quarter.
Cheesus, maybe we'd better stay.

EDDY

No, hell, come along, I got the right change.

GROVE

We won't leave any tip.

EDDY

Let the chink take it outa the girls.

[*They go off.* WAITER *clears table.* EDNA *and* GLADYS *come back all freshened up, with their hair smoothed and lips made bright.*]

EDNA

Say, don't clear away yet, we're not through.

WAITER

Feller pay and went away an' no leave tip.

EDNA

What do you think of that, the lousy, dirty, little cheapskates. Givin' us de air. What do you think a' that?

GLADYS

[*Trying to keep from crying.*] Oo, it's never happened to me before. I never had a feller act like that before. I never had a guy gimme de air before.

EDNA

Don't take on, kid. It's that damn dirty little shrimp done it cause he was sore at me. The rotten little counterjumper. I'd like to wring his neck for him, the little sissy.

WAITER

All right, I no want tip . . . good kid.

EDNA

Say, bring her some tea. The poor kid was all tired out when she came out this evening. She'd be home in bed if she wasn't such a good sport.

GLADYS

[*Sobbing hysterically.*] O, I don't care about him, Edna, it's just everything's so terrible. They always get the good guys and electrocute them or something. Those dirty little cakeeaters talking big about a real guy like Walter Goldberg, when they're not fit to mention his name.

EDNA

There now, Gladys, don't carry on so . . . People'll be thinkin' you're drunk or something.

GLADYS

[*Shrieking.*] I don't care what they think . . . They're all a bunch of swine . . . and when they hear about a real man they want to drag him down, an' they strap him in a chair an' kill him; that's what they do, cause he was a real man he's got to die . . . just because he stood up an' looked 'em straight between the eyes. He's got to die.

(*Blackout*)

[*Her hysterical sobbing continues till the lights go on for the next scene.*]

SCENE II

[*The Turner's living-room, same as Act II.* ELMER *lies flat on a cot against the wall. There is a window behind the cot.* MARTHA *is sitting at a desk with a phone at the head of the bed. Behind the bed there is a window. The* PROFESSOR *sits in a Morris chair in the shadow, with a newspaper crumpled between his knees.*]

ELMER

If I had my strength I bet I'd find a way of getting him out. I'm goin' crazy, lyin' here thinking what I could do if I could stand on my feet. Everybody knows that he didn't have a gun on him and that he told the strikers to keep their shirts on and not to fight the cops. I testified to that, didn't I, Mart?

MARTHA

Of course, everybody testified, but what good is it? Let's not talk about it any more, Elmer.

ELMER

How could he have fired those shots if he didn't have a gun on him? Walter had been arrested a half an hour before the guy was killed anyway.

MARTHA

Easy enough to plant a gun on a man. They were out to get him, that's all, and they got him.

ELMER

But who'd want to get him?

MARTHA

Nobody definite . . . Something vague and bloodthirsty like God, the interests, the bosses, call it what you like.

ELMER

Anyway, the Governor's sure to commute. Davis thinks he'll pardon him outright. He says my testimony made a good impression.

MARTHA

Why does he wait till the last minute then?

ELMER

To teach the reds a lesson, I guess . . . I don't blame him. After all a man of Walter's intelligence ought to leave the stuff alone. What's he going to get out of it? He doesn't think he can make the world over does he? Human beings aren't built that way.

MARTHA

I will not hope . . . I've hoped so much . . . It's so horrible to hope.

ELMER

Mart, they can't do it, I tell you. Mart, what's the matter, you're not going crazy too are you? You and me and the Professor, a fine bunch of nuts.

MARTHA

That'd be too easy.

ELMER

Christ, I think I've got bats in my belfry. I listen for hours to the blood pounding in my ears. There's something in my head goin' tick tock all the time. Don't you think I look kinder funny, Mart?

MARTHA

No, you're looking fine, Elmer.

ELMER

But if I could only sit up just once. If the damned doctor'd only figure out some way.

MARTHA

They will yet.

ELMER

Well, who's bein' hopeful now, Sis? You know as well as I do that when your spine is busted, it's busted.

MARTHA

How about that aviator with a broken neck? He flies all right.

ELMER

I'll never fly again. But it isn't right the way they won't let me have anything to do with All American . . . Every time I ask Dave about it, he just kids me along. It isn't right to treat a feller like that, is it Sis?

MARTHA

You're not strong enough yet, that's all. He doesn't want to worry you.

ELMER

Look here, Sis, you call him up at his house right now. Ask him if I'm president of this damned concern or not . . . and if he says I'm not, ask him when in thunder I resigned. Tell him I insist on knowing every goddam thing there is to know, schedules, timetables, who they're hiring, everything . . . Tell him I insist . . . Tell him he's a damn thief . . . Tell him I want to see the books.

MARTHA

Please don't get so excited, Elmer. I'll call him up.

ELMER

Call him up right now . . . and tell him to give Mae Peteet my love. She's married him, the dirty bitch . . . Tell him . . . Tell him . . . His number's Decatur 3456.

MARTHA

I was going to call him anyway. He went to see the governor. You know, Davis is a pretty good feller.

ELMER

Sure, he's a prince . . . only when a guy's laid up six months or a year, they begin to forget him

. . . Don't tell him any of that. You just talk to him.

MARTHA

They're not forgetting you, Elmer; it's getting to be one of the largest concerns in the country.

PROFESSOR

I'm trying to remember . . . My head's a cracked soup tureen and all the richness is leaking out . . . Isn't it time for supper yet?

MARTHA

We had supper hours ago . . . Are you hungry?

PROFESSOR

O, I see. It's quite all right.

ELMER

Please call up Dave, Mart.

MARTHA

I haven't the nerve for the moment . . . All right, I'll call him up. [*Phone rings.*] Hello . . . Joe, Yes this is Martha Turner . . . No, I haven't any news . . . Yes, I saw him this morning . . . He looks thin and nervous but he's game . . . He gave me a statement he wants given to the press tomorrow morning . . . No, we have no hope. Goodbye, Joe.

ELMER

Who was that?

MARTHA

You used to know him . . . That old feller Joe something, used to be master carpenter when Eddy worked on those houses.

ELMER

Joe Shavlovsky.

MARTHA

Yes, he said he tried to go to a meeting of protest announced . . . You couldn't get within two blocks of the hall . . . police lines all around it . . . Same thing a' State's Prison . . . I don't know what they think we can do . . . Funny, I'm already saying "we" and I used to fight so with Walter about it.

ELMER

God damn it to hell . . . people must be losing their minds . . . They can't go through with it . . . By God, after this I'm through . . . A lot o' good it does me bein' through with anything.

MARTHA

[*Going to phone with her hands clenched.*] Decatur 3456 . . . Hello, is this Mr. Davis's office? No, I wanted Decatur 3456 . . . doesn't answer . . . He's not back yet.

[*Is taken with a fit of trembling. She feels for a chair and sits down.*]

No, no, no!

[*She gets steadily to her feet and walks over to the table at the head of* ELMER'S *bed.*]

It's twenty past eleven . . . I didn't think it would be so late.

ELMER

Twenty minutes past eleven . . . forty five minutes, Oh, my God.

MARTHA

I'm going to wash my face . . . I'll be right back, Elmer.

[*She goes out.*]

PROFESSOR

What's the matter? Why are we all up so late? I've been dozing.

ELMER

Doesn't anything stay in your mind? Don't you remember Walter Goldberg? You and he used to talk by the hour about your goddam social revolution.

PROFESSOR

I don't remember. I've had so many comrades I've worked with, and now this, an old cracked soup-tureen.

Work, worked, we worked in those days for the instruction of the people, worked. Once I worked as a roustabout somewhere on a little wharf on a river. The air was a pink steam of spring . . . Every time I moved it was pleasure, the twist and untwist of my arms . . . We were unloading mel-

ons . . . my fingers tightened round the great smooth melons, then they slipped from my hands into another man's hands . . .

[*The phone begins to ring.*]

ELMER

Answer it, won't you? I would if I could.

PROFESSOR

[*Trying to get to his feet.*] Yes, yes. Where?

ELMER

[*Shrieks.*] Answer it, you fool.

MARTHA

[*Coming back with a quick, confident step.*] That's all right . . . Yes . . . Has he seen him? . . . All right . . . thank you, Mr. Atkinson . . . The lawyers have just been with the Chief Justice of the United States . . . He refuses to grant a habeas corpus.

PROFESSOR

Thou hast the body. That's what it means in Latin.

MARTHA

It's long past your bedtime, Professor. Hadn't you better be getting a little rest?

ELMER

For God's sake, make him go back into his own room, he's driving me crazy . . . Jez, I'm all shot to hell.

MARTHA

I'll have to give you one of your sleeping draughts.

ELMER

Yeah . . . it'd be wonderful to go to sleep.

MARTHA

Really it's bed time.

PROFESSOR

[*Getting to his feet with difficulty.*] Good night, Martha child . . . Maybe we'll have a good day tomorrow.

[*He goes out through the back door.*]

ELMER

Look here, Martha, tomorrow I'm going to a sanatorium . . . I've got jack enough to go to a good one and you're goin' to pack the old fella off somewhere, and you're going to take a trip somewhere . . .

MARTHA

I don't want to take a trip. What'd be the good all alone? I'd like to burn this house down and everything in it.

ELMER

It certainly hasn't brought us any good luck . . . Do you remember after mother died, you and Dad and Claude thought it'd be great not to live in a flat any more.

MARTHA

Do you want the veronal now, or will you wait a little?

ELMER

I'd like to go to sleep, sister.

MARTHA

Poor old feller . . . I'll call up Davis first . . . Decatur 3456 . . . Mr. Davis, this is Martha Turner . . . Yes . . . thank you . . . no, no. Good night.

ELMER

What does he say?

MARTHA

Nothing . . . The governor is not convinced . . . Unless something new turns up the execution must go through soon after midnight.

[*There is a long pause.*]

KIDS

[*Singing in the distance.*]

O we'll hang Walter Goldberg
On a sour apple tree
O we'll hang Walter Goldberg
On a sour apple tree
O, we'll hang him till he's dead

ELMER

What's that?

MARTHA

Nothing, Walt, just kids . . . Here, I'll get you the sleepy stuff.

ELMER

The little sons o' bitches. God, if I could get after 'em with a stick.

MARTHA

Here's the sleepy stuff, Walter.

ELMER

You've called me Walter several times tonight, Mart.

MARTHA

Have I? . . . I'm sorry.

ELMER

[*Sighing.*] O, now I'll go to sleep . . . maybe. My God, if they had any manhood they'd storm the jail and get him out.

MARTHA

They're too weak, Elmer. The government has all the power. They won't let people speak, they won't let them distribute leaflets, there's no free press . . . They're arresting people all over for trying to parade or hold meetings. The jails are full of people who feel the way we do tonight.

ELMER

[*Sleepily.*] It's too godawful terrible . . . What time is it, Mart?

[*She walks once or twice up and down the room before looking at the watch that lies on the table.* ELMER *has already gone to sleep. She leans over and kisses him gently on the forehead and then turns the lamp so that the light falls away from him.*]

KID'S VOICES

O, we'll burn Walter Goldberg
In the electric chair
Burn him till he's dead

COP

[*In a burly voice.*] Getouta there, beat it.

VOICES

[*In the distance.*]
O the kike Walter Goldberg lies amoulderin' in the grave
O the kike Walter Goldberg . . .

[*The phone breaks in deafeningly loud.* MARTHA *goes to the phone, picks up the receiver . . . after listening for a moment she puts the receiver down, starts walking carefully and slowly across the floor, then crumples up all in a heap in the center of the stage.*]

[MARTHA *is lying in the middle of the stage. The phone rings and rings.* MARTHA *gets up heavily, wearily, and goes to it.*]

MARTHA

[*Speaking in a crisp metallic voice.*] Yes . . . Hello, Eliza . . . Yes, that's very nice of you, after all I have no rights . . . He belongs to you people now . . . My part of him is dead . . . I don't know . . . I don't suppose I quite understand it yet, what it is to have Walter dead . . . No, please don't come . . . please don't let anybody come. Let me know when you have the body. [*Puts up the receiver.*]

PROFESSOR

[*Standing in his night clothes in door.*] Thou hast the body, but we . . . we have . . . We will have an enormous funeral procession through the main streets of the city. They'll try to break it up, there'll be wounded and killed at his funeral. He shall not go down into the earth alone. Comrades, from this day we must make ourselves machines, machines of brass and nickel, we must turn our hearts into dynamos, our blood into electric current. Look at my hand . . . The soft twitching flesh is drying up into steel . . .

We must have no more blood and flesh.

Failure is the law of blood and flesh.

We have invented every conceivable kind of ma-

chine; killing machines, fighting machines, feeding machines, swimming machines, flying machines; Man is the last machine we must invent. The electric current that burned out our comrade's life must burn all softness, all tenderness out of our lives. We must be steel automatons.

[*While the* PROFESSOR *is speaking,* CLAUDE TURNER *has come in from stage front. He wears a silk hat and a dress suit under his overcoat and has a prosperous look he never had before.*]

CLAUDE

Aw, shut your trap. Can't you stop talking for one minute . . . I'm sorry, Mart. He gets on my nerves. He ought to be in jail with the rest of them.

MARTHA

[*In a low, nightmare voice.*] He's mad. Can't you see that he's mad? He had a stroke the other day, aphasia. It's a clot on the brain . . . He doesn't know about motors anyway . . . Elmer could tell him about motors. Won't you please go away? I want to be alone with him. I want to be alone with Walter. You see he was so busy always, we hardly had time to get acquainted. We understand each other now. We have lots to say to each other.

CLAUDE

Mart, you must pull yourself together. I know it's pretty tough on you, Mart. . . . But I'm stand-

ing by you, honestly I am. Whatever happens, you're still my sister and I'm going to stand by you for Dad's and Mother's sake.

MARTHA

Claude, I don't understand you.

CLAUDE

I called up Dr. Hopwood. He's very much upset. He's coming round first thing in the morning. That's a minister's job.

MARTHA

[*Laughs hysterically for a moment.*] O, Claude, you always get everything wrong.

[*She goes and sits down on the edge of the bed, where* ELMER *is asleep.*]

CLAUDE

We've all of us made our mistakes, but they don't matter now. All-American Airways is going to declare a forty per cent stock bonus in addition to the regular dividend. It means we're all on easy street from now on.

[*The* PROFESSOR *is still solemnly and deliberately going through the gestures of a funeral oration, his lips move soundlessly.*]

MARTHA

[*Talking to* ELMER *as if to a child. She pays no attention to* CLAUDE.] You see, it's this way, Elmer. I just don't believe it yet. In a day or two I'll start

believing it and it'll be pain . . . pain . . . as if I'd lost him to some other girl . . . you see I'm not the sort that picks up with a fellow easily. I might have been an old maid if it hadn't been for him. It's all the things he used to say to me, the things he used to tell me about, the way he'd drift off from me suddenly even when he had his arms around me, when his lips were reaching for me . . . If I was one of them my misery would be all melted into hate . . . I'd give all my life to working for the things he worked for, but it's not so easy as that . . .

ELMER

O, if you people would only let me sleep. It's so happy to be asleep.

CLAUDE

I've been working on the year's report to the stockholders. Elmer, we're in clover. In the Mineola plant All-American employs 1008 men. The output has increased 110 percent in the last year, production efficiency has increased eighty-six per cent. The assembling and testing plant at Wichita employs 2000 men. Accidents have decreased by 8⅔ percent and have been amply covered by insurance.

MARTHA

If I was going to have a child by him it would be different, but as it is . . . his words are bubbling and scalding inside of me.

ELMER

You need a trip somewhere, sister. Gosh, if I was on my feet I'd take you on a wonderful trip. Claude'll take you.

CLAUDE

Sure, sis. We'll get you a pass on All-American, take you as far as Frisco in the afternoon of the second day . . . the great plains and through Kicking Horse pass in the Rocky Mountains, the tips of your wings just skirting the eternal glaciers . . .

MARTHA

Would four thousand roaring miles drown his voice in my ears?

[*All this time the* PROFESSOR *has been standing motionless in the doorway.* MARTHA *goes up to him and touches him.*]

Aren't you going to bed? It's very late.

PROFESSOR

These men are traitors to the revolution. They have sold us . . . sold . . . their names are . . . I can't remember, child, I can't remember.

MARTHA

Go to bed and get some sleep . . . It's almost morning.

ELMER

It's wonderful to go to sleep . . .

MARTHA

Goodnight then.

[PROFESSOR *goes.* MARTHA *walks over and switches off the light.*]

ELMER

Better take some veronal yourself, sis . . . It's wonderful to sleep.

CLAUDE

[*Takes her by the hand and leads her away from the bed.*] Poor guy, he's losin' touch fast. He doesn't realize All-American has really started yet. Well, sis, it's started all right. Nothing can hurt us now, especially with the clearing up of labor unrest. As I see it, we've done a great patriotic duty restoring confidence, in American enterprise and inventions.

MARTHA

Hush . . . Elmer's gone to sleep. Hadn't you better go home . . . look it's daybreak.

CLAUDE

Maybe I had . . . I've got to be down at the office bright and early. If any reporters or anything call you up don't talk to 'em. Refer 'em to me.

MARTHA

I won't answer the phone again. Goodnight.

CLAUDE

I've got a taxi waiting . . . But sis what are you going to do . . . You must go to bed.

MARTHA

I'm quite all right; please go along. You're driving me crazy. I'm tired.

CLAUDE

[*Kisses her. She shrinks away from him.*] Leave everything to me, sis.

[*He goes out.*]

[MARTHA *stands a moment in the center of the stage and then walks forward and sits on the porch steps. It is beginning to get light.*]

MARTHA

Now I'm beginning to feel it, the house without Walter, the street without him, the city without him, the future that we lived in instead of a honeymoon without him, everything stark without him. Street where I've lived all these years shut up in a matchwood house full of bitterness. City where I've lived walled up in old dead fear. America, where I've scurried from store to subway to church to home, America that I've never known. World where I've lived without knowing. What can I do now that he is gone and that he has left me full of scalding wants,

what can I do with the lack of him inside me like a cold stone? The house I lived in wrecked, the people I loved wrecked, around me there's nothing but words stinging like wasps. Where can I go down the dark street, where can I find a lover in the sleeping city? At what speed of the wind can I fly away, to escape these words that burn and sting, to escape the lack that is in me like a stone.

CURTAIN

I-5

R00016 21689

CLOSED STACKS

812 258737

DOS PASSOS

AIRWAYS, INC.

ATLANTA PUBLIC LIBRARY